George Eliot and Pre-Raphaelitism:
Literature, Painting, Sculpture and Photography

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I hereby declare that this thesis has not been submitted, either in the same or different form to this or any other University for a degree.

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SUMMARY

This thesis explores the multi-layered inter-relationships between the works of George Eliot and those of the Pre-Raphaelites. Taking up the very different mediums of painting, sculpture, and photography as they emerge in Pre-Raphaelitism, it assesses their relation to Eliot's novels as reinforcing a web of Victorian visual art and literature.

The discussion begins by examining proximities between the paintings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Eliot's *Adam Bede* and *Daniel Deronda*. I explore, in particular, their shared interest in dichotomies of female representation in the nineteenth century, and ways in which the opposing traits of the sacred and sexual are interwoven.

The second chapter reads Eliot in the context of writings by Walter Pater. Reassessing the prevalent perspective that Eliot was opposed to the ideas of Pater, I argue that, like him, Eliot passionately sought to elucidate the relationship between life and art through studies of the early Renaissance. In Pater's *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* and Eliot's *Romola* the authors are linked by their use of web imagery and their interest in the effects of music within the realms of literature and art.

In the third chapter, exploring elements of the New Sculpture movement in the late nineteenth century together with the writings of Johann Joachim Winckelmann, I analyse ways in which sculptural representations are rendered in Eliot's, *Middlemarch,* and the paintings of Edward Burne-Jones.

The final chapter focuses on the nascent medium of nineteenth century, photography. By considering photographs by Julia Margaret Cameron in relation to *The Mill on the Floss*, I explore the way in which both Cameron's and Eliot's works embody a particular conception of childhood and the memory of childhood. My study concludes by re-visiting the phenomenon of the interweave of image and the text during the nineteenth century.

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Abbreviations:

AB	*Adam Bede* ed. Doreen Roberts (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth, 1997)
DD	*Daniel Deronda* ed. Terence Cave (London: Penguin, 1995)
M	*Middlemarch*, ed. W. J. Hervey (London: Penguin, 1986)
MF	*The Mill on the Floss*, ed. Gordon S. Haight (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008)
R	*Romola*, ed. Dorothea Barrett (London: Penguin, 2005)
Appreciations	Walter Pater*, Appreciations with an Essay on the Style* (London: Macmillan, 1890)
Essays	*Essays of George Eliot*, ed. Thomas Pinney (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963)
HAA	Johann Joachim Winckelmann*, History of the Art of Antiquity*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave, intro. Alex Potts (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2006)
Letters	*The George Eliot Letters,* Vols. I-VIII, ed. Gordon S. Haight (New Haven: Yale UP, 1954-1978)
Memorials	Burne-Jones, Georgiana, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, Vols. I –II (London: Macmillan, 1904)
Ruskin	John Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin* (Library Edition), Vols. V-VI, eds. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London and New York, 1904)
SHR	Walter Pater*, Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, ed. Matthew Beaumont (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010)
The Journals	*The Journals of George Eliot,* eds. Margaret Harris and Judith Johnston (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998)
The Works	*The Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, ed. William Michael Rossetti (London: Ellis, 1911)

Introduction

> And I want in gratitude to tell you that your work makes life larger and more beautiful to me—I mean that historical life of all the world in which our little personal share of her seems a mere standing room from which we can look all round, and chiefly backward. Perhaps the work has a strain of special sadness in it—perhaps a deeper sense of the tremendous outer forces which urge us than of the inner impulse towards heroic struggle and achievement . . . [1]

The catalogue of the exhibition *Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde* held at Tate Britain in 2012 tantalisingly quotes the observation above of George Eliot, the nineteenth century novelist, on a painting by Edward Burne-Jones: *Love among the Ruins* (1893-4).[2] I regard this intriguing appearance of a contemporary novelist in a catalogue of the visual arts to be an endeavour on the part of the exhibition organisers to reinforce particular aspects of the interdisciplinary, creative and intellectual dynamics associated with Pre-Raphaelitism. In fact, Tate Britain made a clear attempt to distinguish the 2012 exhibition of the Pre-Raphaelites' works from the previous exhibition of 1984 entitled *The Pre-Raphaelites.* In a pithy review 'In a word: Pre-Raphaelite, Pre-Raphaelites, Pre-Raphaelitism', Deborah Cherry clearly describes what she regards as the inadequacy of the display and analysis of the works in the exhibition of 1984; in particular she refers to the absence of decorative art, including furniture, textiles, wallpaper and stained glass, and more significantly, the element of literature.[3]

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[1] *Letters,* Vol. V, p. 391.
[2] Tim Barringer, Jason Rosenfeld, Alison Smith, eds., *The Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde*, (London: Tate Publishing, 2014), p. 229.
[3] Deborah Cherry, 'In a word: Pre-Raphaelite, Pre-Raphaelites, Pre-Raphaelitism' in Michaela Giebelhausen and Tim Barringer, eds., *Writing the Pre-Raphaelites: Texts, Context, Subtext* (Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2009, pp. 17-51), p. 18.

The 1984 exhibition prioritised paintings and the content of the catalogue was merely a collection of biographical sources, memoirs, and anecdotes from the lives of the young artists; it thereby dwelt primarily on the relationship between the works and the artists' lives.[4] In the same article, Cherry also takes issue with the fact that female artists who were deeply involved with the Pre-Raphaelite circle were largely ignored in the collection.[5] The 1984 exhibition failed to highlight the multifaceted nature of Pre-Raphaelite art, which incorporated important insights on the philosophical, intellectual and aesthetic ideologies of the nineteenth century. Consequently, the most recent exhibition catalogue of 2012 responded to the criticism of the previous exhibition. It included the statement that the show endeavoured to highlight the iridescent colour of the avant-garde art of the Pre-Raphaelites, together with a diverse range of art forms and media, including "painting, drawing, sculpture, photography and the applied arts, as well as literature and political theory."[6] Furthermore, by introducing the term, "Pre-Raphaelite sisterhood," female artists such as Christina Rossetti, Elizabeth Siddall[7] and Julia Margaret Cameron were recognised, and examples of their art works were

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[4] Ibid., pp. 25-37.

[5] Ibid., p. 42. See also Cherry's discussion with Griselda Pollock 'Woman as Sign in Pre-Raphaelite Literature: The Representation of Elizabeth Siddall' in Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism, and Histories of Art* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994, pp. 91-114).

[6] The catalogue explains that "In a significant review the feminist art historian Deborah Cherry and Griselda Pollock took issue with the curators' biographical, rather than thematic, approach to art history and the patriarchal account of gender relations they appeared to endorse." See the introduction to *The Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde*, p. 9.

[7] In 'Woman as Sign in Pre-Raphaelite Literature', Cherry and Pollock have corrected the spelling to "Siddall", which was the original spelling of her family name. Although "Siddal" was traditionally used in memoirs of the male artists and in art history, the scholars read "Siddal" as "signifier in and for a discourse about the establishment of masculine dominance/feminine subordination." See p. 96. It seems that scholars have gradually acknowledged the controversy of the spelling of "Siddal." For example, one of the recent books about the Pre-Raphaelites, *Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites*, published in 2012, uses "Siddall", considering Cherry's and Pollock's discussion. Hence I use this spelling throughout my thesis.

incorporated in the collection.[8] Thus, in this context, George Eliot's comment on Burne-Jones's painting may have been consciously cited in the exhibition catalogue to emphasise the involvement of female writers as well as artists in the Pre-Raphaelite circle.

To what extent, however, is it relevant to further explore the relationship between George Eliot and the Pre-Raphaelites? What links exist between Eliot and their circle? The Tate catalogue fails to mention the fact that she was a very close friend of Edward Burne-Jones and his wife Georgiana. More significantly, in fact, Eliot occupied an extensive social web linking both directly and indirectly to members of Pre-Raphaelite circle such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti, John Everett Millais, William Holman Hunt, and other contemporary artists and writers including Frederic Leighton, George Frederic Watts, Walter Pater, William Morris, and Julia Margaret Cameron.[9] Also Barbara Bodichon, one of the most important female artists and feminists of the "Pre-Raphaelite sisterhood," is known to have been a very close friend to Eliot, and the writer supported this female painter's career, as is recoded in the substantial number

[8] Since the 1980s, the involvement of female artists in Pre-Raphaelitism has been accepted. See the relevant publications such as Jan Marsh's books *Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood* (London: Quartet, 1985) and *Pre-Raphaelite Women: Image of Femininity in Pre-Raphaelite Art* (London: Phoenix Illustrated, 1987); An exhibition of Pre-Raphaelite Women was held at Manchester City Art Galleries, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, and Southampton City Gallery in 1998. Also see Jan Marsh and Pamela Gerrish Nunn, eds., *Pre-Raphaelite Women Artists* (Manchester City Galleries, 1997).

[9] I quote some of the correspondences exchanged between Eliot and contemporary artists in this thesis. As a quick example, the following letter from the novelist to George Frederic Watts epitomises their friendship. The letter refers to a bust of *Clytie* (1868-78) that Watts sent to Eliot, and the copy was brought by Rossetti and Burne-Jones to her in 1870: "You have sent me the finest present I ever had in all my life, and I wish you knew better than I can tell you how much good it has done me. But Mr. Rossetti was telling me on Sunday that you have long been and still are continually suffering from bad health, … The Bust looks grander and grander in my eyes now that I can turn to it from time to time. Mr. Burne-Jones, who had a generous delight in carrying it, brought me also the message, that we should not be unwelcome if on some fine day we presented ourselves in your studio." Gordon S. Haight, 'George Eliot and Watts' Clytie' in *The Yale University Library Gazette* Vol. 56, No. 3/4 (April, 1982, pp. 65-69), p. 67. Haight shows that Watts also admired Eliot's works, especially, *Felix Holt*. Ibid., p. 65.

of letters exchanged between the pair.[10] Nonetheless, the relationship between George Eliot and the Pre-Raphaelite circle has remained little more than a footnote in the realm of art history. Indeed, to date that relationship has been largely unexplored, especially in terms of the context and content of their works beyond the theme of realism and the domain of biography. This thesis thus addresses this neglected strand of art and literary history. The investigation makes problematic Eliot's established reputation in realist representation. In demonstrating how Eliot's work becomes a composite of contemporaneous movements in art and art theory, I reposition Eliot as a writer with Pre-Raphaelite and Aesthetic sensibilities, and challenge the common and enduring comparison of her work with realist art work such as that of the earlier Pre-Raphaelites with their emblematic creed of "truth to nature." In so doing, I attempt to chart eclectic affinities of nineteenth century literature and visual art. By examining the relevance of the works of Eliot to contemporary visual and aesthetic discourse, I probe the extent to which we can newly trace creative threads that weave a web of nineteenth century art culture.

Much remains to be discussed on the topic of Eliot and the visual arts, especially the aspect of Pre-Raphaelitism that encompasses the most significant transition of the nineteenth century aesthetic, from realism to aestheticism. Moreover, the topic may be approached from a number of productive perspectives. Hugh Witemeyer has thoroughly explored the profound influence of nineteenth century visual culture upon Eliot's writing, including the novelist's own experience of viewing continental art in

[10] Jan Marsh refers to the friendship between Bodichon and Eliot in her *Pre-Raphaelite Women Artists,* pp. 102-104. Their friendship lasted throughout the novelist's life and in her letter to Bodichon in 1861, Eliot celebrated her exhibition: "Bessie has sent me tickets for a private view of your pictures, and I'm particularly glad to be among privileged, since we are to start so soon." *Letters,* Vol. III, p. 402.

person.[11] His outstanding examinations, however, focus mainly on the paintings of continental, religious and classical art, Eliot's earlier interest in physiognomy, and the portraiture to which she refers directly in her works. While, of course, Witemeyer does not ignore the presence of the Pre-Raphaelites in relation to the works of George Eliot, he does not fully develop the discussion of the links between the novelist and the movement of Aestheticism that the Pre-Raphaelites initiated, or other genres of visual art including sculpture and photography.[12] Likewise, John Murdoch's essay focuses on realism in the early Pre-Raphaelite works and Eliot's writing, while juxtaposing her novels and the works of William Holman Hunt and John Ruskin.[13] One of the common problems with the studies of George Eliot's work in relation to Pre-Raphaelitism seems to be a tendency to simply associate her representations to styles of realism; this tendency thereby ignores subtle but significant explorations and transitions in her view upon aesthetics in relation to representations in her novels.

Meanwhile, each of the recent articles by Leonée Ormond, Andrew Leng, and Rebecca Rainof go further to examine the development of George Eliot's insights into the Pre-Raphaelite art and her understanding of aesthetic theory: Ormond charts the substantial number of correspondences between George Eliot and individual contemporary artists, and notes Eliot's complex friendships with them[14]; Leng suggests that subtle changes in the characters' sensibilities in Eliot's novels reflect the change in

[11] Hugh Witemeyer, *George Eliot and the Visual Arts* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1979).
[12] Concerning contemporary artists, however, Witemeyer discusses the illustrations of Frederic Leighton to Eliot's *Romola*. See his chapter 'Frederic Leighton's Illustrations of *Romola*' in *George Eliot and the Visual Arts*, pp. 157-170.
[13] John Murdoch, 'English Realism: George Eliot and the Pre-Raphaelites' in *The Journals of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 37 (1974, pp. 313-329).
[14] Leonée Ormond, 'George Eliot and The Victorian Art World' in *The George Eliot Review*: *Journal of the George Eliot Fellowship*, No. 36 (2005, pp. 25-38).

her own taste in Pre-Raphaelite art;[15] while, recently, Rainof has examined Eliot's increasing interest in the relationship between visual and verbal art, "visual stasis and narrative movement," by considering her adherence to Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's aesthetic theory and to the later Pre-Raphaelitism, especially to Dante Gabriel Rossetti's exploration of verbal and visual arts.[16] Since these studies have thus reconfigured our view of Eliot's sympathy for Pre-Raphaelitism, my thesis will further chart the art of Eliot and more diverse aesthetic representations in Pre-Raphaelitism including poetry, aesthetic theory, sculpture, and photography, while considering nineteenth century visual discourse and context, including elements of aestheticism, New Sculpture, and the dissemination of photography.

This exploration, I hope, also thereby leads to a broader reconsideration of the connection between the Pre-Raphaelites and literature. Significant links between Pre-Raphaelitism and literature have previously been considered. Michaela Giebelhausen and Tim Barringer state that "The Pre-Raphaelite project was both text and image. Pre-Raphaelite artists produced poems and short stories, literary reviews and essays as well as paintings, drawings, engravings, and sculpture."[17] Pre-Raphaelites artists attempted to eliminate the boundary between visual art and literature.[18] With the declaration of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in 1848, the initial members, William Holman Hunt and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, created a list called "the Immortals" in order

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[15] Andrew Leng, ' "Dorothea Brooke's Awakening Consciousness" and Pre-Raphaelite Aesthetic in *Middlemarch*' accessed from a website by George P. Landow, *The Victorian Web: Literature, History, Culture in the Age of Victoria*, http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/eliot/middlemarch/leng2.html [Accessed July 2016].

[16] Rebecca Rainof, 'George Eliot's Screaming Statues, Laocoon, and the Pre-Raphaelites' in *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (Autumn 2014, pp.875-899).

[17] Michaela Giebelhausen and Tim Barringer 'Introduction: Pre-Raphaelite Mythologies' in *Writing the Pre-Raphaelites*, p. 9.

[18] Elizabeth Prettejohn, 'Introduction' in Elizabeth Prettejohn, ed., *The Cambridge Companions to the Pre-Raphaelites* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2012), p. 6.

to articulate their creed. The list includes not only artists they aspired to emulate but also writers and poets such as Homer, Dante, Boccaccio, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, Byron, Wordsworth, Poe, Tennyson, and Thackeray.[19] Isobel Armstrong regards the list as highlighting the artists' attempt "to unite an English literary tradition with a continental tradition, where a pictorial and textual history pre-dated Raphael and brought Italian and German writing together."[20] This fusion of the elements of literature and art has been an increasingly vital component in studies concerning Pre-Raphaelitism.[21] Each of the figures of Victorian art culture that I will discuss at length in this thesis, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Walter Pater, Edward Burne-Jones, and Julia Margaret Cameron, have bodies of work that are eminently inspired by literature. Elizabeth Prettejohn has recently pointed out the problem of the inadequate interdisciplinary arrangement of studies of Pre-Raphaelite literature and Pre-Raphaelite visual art, and suggested that the latter tends to be separated from "the web of literary relationships."[22] The word, "web", as I will discuss more fully later, becomes an eminent symbol and concept in the contents and contexts of nineteenth century literature and art and also in my thesis. I suggest that the extensive web of Pre-Raphaelitism involves not only the literature produced by the Pre-Raphaelites themselves but also other works of nineteenth century literature such as the fiction of George Eliot. The threads of Eliot's novels of and those of Pre-Raphaelitism weave a significant web of nineteenth aesthetic discourse.

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[19] See the full list quoted in the Appendix 2 in *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites,* p. 277.

[20] Isobel Armstrong 'The Pre-Raphaelites and Literature' in Elizabeth Prettejohn, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites,* p. 17.

[21] Sophia Andres argues that Victorian novels are narrative reconfigurations of Pre-Raphaelite paintings. See *The Pre-Raphaelite Art of the Victorian Novel: Narrative Challenges to the Visual Gendered Boundaries* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2005).

[22] Prettejohn, 'Introduction' in *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites*, p. 7.

To explore the work of George Eliot and that of the Pre-Raphaelites, it remains essential to consider the shared inception from which their careers emerged: realism. Pre-Raphaelitism is often associated with an aspiration to achieve an objective perspective. The artists' diligent studies of nature and accurate delineations of botanical images became their aesthetic hallmark. However, the innovation of the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood does not simply lie in their accurate manner of depiction but also in their exploration of the art of perception and in challenging the habit of individual acts of seeing. By studying nature in detail, the artists attempt to make their accurate descriptions of external reality transcend physical value into the spiritual realm. Like the artists, George Eliot also seeks to unravel the invisible relationship between physical and inner eyes that respectively conceive the material and the spiritual, metaphysical world.

The development of the careers of both the novelist and the artists owes much to one particular art critic. It was John Ruskin who defended the Pre-Raphaelites by associating their works with J.M.W. Turner's, and compared their ways of observing and approaching nature. While the nineteenth century art world was obsessed with visual articulation of the external world from an objective and unselfish point of view, it was Ruskin who prominently observed and found moral worth in such acts of looking. In his *Modern Painters III,* he writes, "All the great men *see* what they paint before they paint it—see it in a perfectly passive manner."[23] As Lindsay Smith notes, a plain way of seeing clearly, for Ruskin, requires the artist's "elimination of a 'distorting

[23] *Ruskin,* Vol. V, p. 114.

self' " or a form of "self-annihilation." [24] The artist needs to eliminate himself and, as Smith quotes, Ruskin writes " [The artist] becomes great when he becomes invisible."[25] Ruskin advocates that unmediated views should be transcribed into representations without any self-assertion and irrational fancy. The earlier works of William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti resonated with the voice of Ruskin; especially the works of the former two distilled the essence of the art critic in that they prioritised their direct and meticulous studies from nature. On the other hand, Rossetti gradually distorted or reconfigured the views of Ruskin: The artist began to accept self-consciousness and a subjective interior world as being part of human nature that also needed to be represented in an unmediated mode. Rossetti and his followers, Walter Pater, Simeon Solomon, Edward Burne-Jones, and Julia Margaret Cameron sought physical and material forms that mediated psychological and spiritual entities while developing their aesthetic symbolism. Their sources of inspiration for beauty expanded from nature to things mediated through human vision including female beauty, literature, Renaissance and Greek art, and photography.

Meanwhile, George Eliot overtly concurred with Ruskin's views and attempted to achieve the concept of elimination of the self in her earlier works. Her enthusiasm for Ruskin can be viewed in her review of his *Modern Painters III* published in the *Westminster Review* in 1856. Eliot praises Ruskin as a "fair metaphysician and a careful observer of the phenomena of natural scenery."[26] The third person narrators of Eliot's

[24] Lindsay Smith, *Victorian Photography, Painting and Poetry: The Enigma of Visibility in Ruskin, Morris and The Pre-Raphaelites* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995), p. 24.
[25] Cited in Ibid.
[26] Eliot quotes from Ruskin's book in her review that the art critic "has to take some note of optics, geometry, geology, botany, and anatomy; he must acquaint himself with the works of all great artists, and with the temper and history of the times in which they lived; he must be a fair

fiction attempt to depict all of her characters' psychology, eliminating a subjective point of view. This could be read as a Ruskinian aspect, since Ruskin states in *Modern Painters III,* which Eliot also quoted in her review, that: "to invent a story, or admirably and thoroughly tell any part of a story, it is necessary to grasp the entire mind of every personage concerned in it, and know precisely how they would be affected by what happens. . ."[27] Eliot was also inspired by the earlier Pre-Raphaelite art that resounds with Ruskin's theory. In her journal entitled 'Recollection of Weimar of 1854', she describes glass globes she saw in a park in the following way:

> At one spot where there was a semicircular seat placed against an artificial rock, there were 3 large glass globes of different colour placed at the back of the seat and a fourth on a pillar in front of it. It was wonderful to see how beautifully the scenery round is painted in these globes. Each is like a pre-Raphaelite picture with every little detail of gravelly walk, mossy banks and delicate-leaved interlacing boughs in perfect miniature.[28]

This experience of viewing reflections in the glass globes became the artistic inception of Eliot's realist writing. The view in a reflecting sphere creates a more intricate illusion of depth than does a flat mirror reflection, as demonstrated in the lithograph print *Hand with Reflecting Sphere* (1935) by M. C. Escher. The view of the landscape reduced into the globes without any interference of mediation fascinated the novelist. Her comparison of the view with "a pre-Raphaelite picture" indicates that she wishes to narrate the objects she sees, with the faithfulness of the reflection in the globe. However, in her later career, Eliot gradually begins to acknowledge the intense conflict between an inevitable limitation of an individual's perception and the desire to

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metaphysician, and a careful observer of the phenomena of natural scenery." *George Eliot: Selected Essays, Poems and Other Writings,* eds., A.S Byatt and Nicholas Warren (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 369.

[27] Ibid., p. 377.

[28] *The Journals*, p. 224.

understand external reality or other people's states of mind. Like Rossetti, Pater and Burne-Jones, the novelist employs symbols and artefacts that represent the individual interior world in her later novels.

So how are the transitions in Pre-Raphaelitism and in the novels of George Eliot related? Isobel Armstrong specifies the year 1862, that of death of Elizabeth Siddall, painter, the wife and muse of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, as the start of "the second phase" of the Pre-Raphaelites.[29] Coincidently, the writing of Eliot is also marked by a change of style in 1862, with the publication of *Romola*, a historical novel that received ambivalent reviews. This novel is one of the most ambitious and experimental of Eliot's works that attempted to fuse history and fiction, featuring an increased number of references both to art in general and to real artworks and painters, and this reflects, I suspect, Eliot's concern for the question of the relationship between art and life. Her experimentation in the 1860s continued in her attempt to write poetry, an example being the poem *Spanish Gypsy* in 1868, and her short essay on art theory entitled 'Notes on Form in Art' in that same year. Yet at this time Eliot still remained enthusiastic for Pre-Raphaelite art. In a letter of 1869 the English suffragist and friend of Eliot, Emily Davies, wrote to Anna Richardson describing the way in which Eliot responded enthusiastically to the art she enjoyed during her trip to Italy:

> She talked a great deal about Italy. . . She has seen *now*, the frescoes at San Marco. She began talking about them before I had time to ask her, . . . She has come to the conclusion that the Pre-Raphaelites are right, and that the time of really high, noble art, was before Rafael[sic].[30]

[29] Armstrong, 'The Pre-Raphaelites and Literature' in *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites,* p. 28.
[30] *Letters,* Vol. VIII, pp. 455-6.

Eliot's view, as reported here, not only indicates her admiration for primitive Italian art but also the strong resonance Pre-Raphaelite art had with her, as the statement "the Pre-Raphaelites are right" unequivocally shows. In fact, the brotherhood lost solidarity with regard to its initial realist creed soon after it declared its establishment in 1848, and, during the 1860s, at the time in which Eliot expressed the above opinion, the circle was evolving into "the second phase" comprising a mixture of old and new members including Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Simeon Solomon, Algernon Charles Swinburne, and William Morris. This second generation of Pre-Raphaelites did not necessarily inherit the initial visual style of the first. Whereas one of the initial founders and committed Pre-Raphaelite, William Holman Hunt, overtly expressed his disappointment with Rossetti's deviation from their fundamental creed,[31] Eliot favoured Rossetti's art and that of his follower Burne-Jones as well as Hunt's and Millais's works. Curiously then Eliot seems to be sympathetic to both the earlier and later tenets of Pre-Raphaelitism.

The work of Eliot too underwent a transition as Pre-Raphaelitism evolved. George Levine states that "From *Romola* through *Daniel Deronda*, her thought and art were profoundly complicated by the external truth she could not avoid, by intensified recognition of the difficulties of knowing and by the cost of that rapt attention to visitors and to nature that knowledge required."[32] Sophia Andres also argues that "the Pre-Raphaelite impact on Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* is significantly different from that on

[31] His mixed views on Rossetti is written in his book *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, Vols. I-II (London: Chapman and Hall, 1913).
[32] George Levine, 'George Eliot's Hypothesis of Reality' in *Nineteenth- Century Fiction*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (June, 1980, pp. 1-28), p. 3.

her earlier novels."[33] Eliot's gradual realisation after the 1860s of the difficulty of transcribing external reality with an objective perspective is correlative with the transition of realism in the nineteenth century. Linda Nochilin notes that the transition within realism, from faithful mimetic transcriptions of the external and physical world, to faithful transcriptions of subjective and imaginative aspects of interior worlds was a subject about which nineteenth century artists were particularly concerned.[34] This fundamental shift in realism can be observed in the works of the Pre-Raphaelite artists, especially the second generation, and those of Eliot. The initial Pre-Raphaelite creed of "truth to nature" dissolved into the art movement of Aestheticism that followed it.

As Ruth Z. Temple considers the elusive definition of Aestheticism, she points out that there is no such transition in the realm of literature.[35] Moreover, she constructs the argument that, in fact, Pre-Raphaelitism *is* Aestheticism.[36] If, as Temple contends, Aestheticism is simply a part of Pre-Raphaelitism or *vice versa*, how are we to interpret fully Eliot's overt sympathy and admiration for the work of the Pre-Raphaelites, including Rossetti and Burne-Jones, whose paintings became the seeds of Aestheticism? What became clear is that thus Eliot's sympathy for Pre-Raphaelitism cannot simply be translated as an enthusiasm for the art of realist rendering based on "truth to nature." Such transition from the effort to obtain an objective eye to a more

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[33] Andres, *The Pre-Raphaelite Art of the Victorian Novel: Narrative Challenges to the Visual Gendered Boundaries*, p. 98.

[34] Linda Nochilin notes that "The transformation of the realist concept of truth or honesty, meaning truth or honesty to one's perception of the external physical or social world, to mean truth or honesty either to the nature of the material—i.e. to the nature of the flat surface—and/or to the demands of one's inner 'subjective' feeling or imagination rather than to some external reality." See Nochilin, *Realism* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1977), p. 236.

[35] Ruth Z. Temple, 'Truth in Labelling: Pre-Raphaelitism, Aestheticism, Decadence, Fin de Siècle' in *English Literature in Transition 1880-1920*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (1974, pp. 201-222), p. 212.

[36] Ibid.

subjective and aesthetic eye in the writing of Eliot and in Pre-Raphaelitism thus needs to be further examined.

Although Ruskin's aesthetic theory seems to be disregarded by the advocates of Aestheticism, the art critic did create a space for artists to contemplate the way in which they approach the external and internal world both physically and metaphysically. In *Modern Painters III*, Ruskin by no means denies the power of imagination but gives an earnest analysis on the nature of imagination. He explains the ideal manner in which one observes the external world as it is, but in the following example he invites the reader to imagine the sight of the Alps in Switzerland:

> Examine the nature of your own emotion (if you feel it) as the sight of the Alps, and you find all the brightness of that emotion hanging, *like dew on gossamer, on a curious web of subtle fancy and imperfect knowledge*. First, you have a vague idea of its size, coupled with wonder at the work of the great Builder of its walls and foundations, then an apprehension of its eternity, a pathetic sense of its perpetualness, and your own transientness, as of the grass upon its sides; then, and in this very sadness, as sense of strange companionship with past generations in seeing what they saw. [Italics mine][37]

Ruskin explains the process through which one's perception of physical reality transcends to a metaphysical realm. He suggests that the initial impression of the external world is created by one's subjective understanding of the sight and one's limited knowledge, and he describes the initial internal perception of the external object as "a curious web of subtle fancy and imperfect knowledge." In the process of viewing a landscape such as the Alps, it is important for Ruskin to objectively examine what is seen and caught in the web of an individual's interior realm: From the vague recognition of the size of the mountains, Ruskin develops his observation into the

[37] *Ruskin*, Vol. V, p.177.

transcendental scene of the invisible past and the eternality that is incorporated in the Alps. Ruskin suggests that the view of the mountains simultaneously reflects the viewer's feeble mortality and her/his sense of the connection to the deceased past generations. For Ruskin, this kind of nobility mixed with empirical and metaphysical imagination can help us to access the truth in nature. What is most significant in the quotation above is that Ruskin compares the individual's perception to a web that consists of a number of strings of emotion and knowledge, weaving with physical experiences, and this can potentially makes an observer entangled with too much subjective input.[38]

In fact, the image of the web appears prior to the publication of Ruskin's *Modern Painters III* in Alfred Tennyson's 'The Lady of Shalott'(1832), which introduces a striking piece of web imagery. The Lady of Shalott is confined to a tower in thrall and only allowed to see the world outside through the reflection of a mirror. Isobel Armstrong regards her as the fusion of the female weavers in the myth, Arachne and Penelope,[39] as she weaves a web while viewing the reflection in the mirror: "But in her web she still delights/ To weave the mirror's magic sights."[40] The Lady as a representation of both artists and art objects, as Joseph Chadwick, Martin Meisel and Kathy Alexis Psomiades claim, indicates the problem of the artist's vocation and the relationship

[38] In another chapter of *Modern Painters III*, 'Of Classical Landscape', he again refers to the web: "we fall necessarily into the curious web of hesitating sentiment, pathetic fallacy, and wandering fancy, which form a great part of our modern view of nature." *Ruskin,* Vol. V*,* p. 231. The imagery of webs, or other equivalents including threads and mysterious mazes are used later in his lectures at Oxford and in other writing including 'The Labyrinth' in *Fors Clavigera*, and 'Story of Arachne.' See J Hillis Miller's analysis on Ruskin's use of web and labyrinth imagery in his 'Ariadne's Thread: Repetition and the Narrative Line' in Mario J. Valdés and Owen J. Miller, eds., *Interpretation of Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), pp. 148-166.

[39] Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry*: *Poetry, Poetics and Politics* (London, New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 83.

[40] Alfred Tennyson, *The Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson* (Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth, 2008), p. 57.

between society and the autonomous world of the artist.[41] The Lady is separated from society and her existence is not known to the world.[42] Chadwick notes that "the mirror reveals that the Lady's apparently autonomous subjectivity and desire" since it is her only means of viewing the outside. It becomes a figure for "a particular form of perception and imagination; the form which isolates the artist from any active participation in public social life."[43] Therefore, the Lady of Shalott's web, woven by the image reflected in the mirror, symbolises an interior and subjective world without any direct interaction with the external world. Like Ruskin's metaphor of the web, Tennyson's web becomes a symbol of imagination and the interaction between subjectivity and objectivity, individual and society, and art and life. The Pre-Raphaelite artists were keen to portray this tragic feminine figure, as exemplified in Hunt's illustrations and paintings and Rossetti's illustration. Moreover, the following artists Eliot, Rossetti, Pater, Burne-Jones, and Cameron are also caught in this concept of the metaphysical web. As my thesis charts the relationship between Eliot and Pre-Raphaelitism, it also emphasises how in the transition from realism to aestheticism Eliot and contemporary artists continued to weave a web of the external world and interior visions, and materiality and spirituality.

As Tennyson depicts a contemplative and autonomous web woven by the feminine figure The Lady of Shalott, female representations become pervasive subjects

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[41] Joseph Chadwick, 'A Blessing and a Curse: The Poetics of Privacy in Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott"' *Victorian Poetry*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Spring, 1986, pp. 13-30); Martin Meisel, '"Half Sick of Shadows": The Aesthetic Dialogue in Pre-Raphaelite Painting' in eds., U.C. Knoepflmacher and G.B. Tennyson, *Nature and The Victorian Imagination* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1977, pp. 309-340); Kathy Alexis Psomiades, *Beauty's Body: Femininity and Representation in British Aestheticism* (California: Stanford UP, 1997).

[42] Chadwick, 'A Blessing and a Curse: The Poetics of Privacy in Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott"' in *Victorian Poetry,* p. 18.

[43] Ibid., p. 18; p. 21.

for nineteenth century artists and writers to explore. This thesis starts off by examining female representations, especially the ways in which George Eliot and Dante Gabriel Rossetti explore female subjects. In *Beauty's Body*, Kathy Psomiades argues that nineteenth century feminine images become icons that constitute an aesthetic ideology for artists such as Rossetti.[44] Visual images of women in the Victorian period highlight the prevalent cultural dichotomy of the Madonna, or divine type of woman, and the fallen woman type, and they represent a more complex element of aestheticism. Psomiades suggests that a feminine figure represents "a creature of inaccessible psychological depth and tangible material surface" and is thus both spiritual and material, providing artists with an autonomous representational space to cultivate. In so doing, Dante Gabriel Rossetti attempted to pervert feminine images while distorting a version of "truth to nature." Chapter I thus focuses on Rossetti's representations of female figures in his painting in relation to the delineation of female characters in two novels by George Eliot. The structure of Eliot's novels appears consistent in presenting two archetypes of woman that appear to represent the Victorian types of the divine and the fallen, respectively. However, I will address the way in which Rossetti and Eliot question those established representations. To make my case, I have specifically chosen Eliot's first novel *Adam Bede* (1859) and her last novel *Daniel Deronda* (1876) to emphasise her consistent deployment of female pairs and her questioning of the artificiality of this dichotomisation.

One of the admirers of Rossetti, Walter Pater, is committed to examine the relationship between life and art. Chapter II focuses on works by Walter Pater in relation to Eliot. Pater's association with aestheticism is best known through his spirit

[44] Psomiades, *Beauty's Body*, p. 2.

of art for art's sake manifested in the Conclusion of *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873). Although Pater's writings rarely dealt with contemporary visual art, Prettejohn regards his essays as equivalent to the poetry of Rossetti or the paintings of Burne-Jones.[45] I argue that the writings of Pater and Eliot are similar in the richness of their intellectual and aesthetic insights. Although at first glance Pater's writing may leave little impression of the didactic tone of a Victorian writer, his new approach to art is implicitly connected with the new perspectives of his ethical viewpoint. Whereas contemporary thinkers such as Matthew Arnold continued to regard highly the act of "seeing things as they are," [46] Pater explored the subject in different ways. His exploration, in fact, as Kenneth Daley demonstrates, is in some ways similar to Ruskin's writing.[47] Indeed, Pater's writings reconstruct the imagery of the web and threads in order to articulate the relationship between the interior and the material world: In Pater's case, unlike Ruskin's, the subject of observation is art, not nature. Likewise, the fiction of Eliot is a mixture of aesthetic and ethical observations, which encompasses a number of images of the web or threads. Eliot aimed to achieve a harmonious interaction between aesthetics and ethics in her writing. Observations on the interrelationship between life and art greatly concerned both Eliot and Pater and their concerns for these matters are especially distilled in their separate studies of the Renaissance, namely in Pater's *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873) and Eliot's *Romola* (1862-3). In Chapter II, therefore, I examine the ways in which Pater's and Eliot's view on life and art are evident in their

[45] Elizabeth Prettejohn, 'Walter Pater and Aesthetic Painting' in Elizabeth Prettejohn, ed., *After the Pre-Raphaelites: Art and Aestheticism in Victorian England* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1999, pp.36-58.), p.36.
[46] Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy,* ed. Jane Garnett (Oxford, New York: Oxford UP, 2009).
[47] Kenneth Daley, *The Rescue of Romanticism: Walter Pater and John Ruskin* (Athens: Ohio UP, 2001).

reconsideration of the prosperity of Renaissance culture and art. I also include discussion of a contemporary painter, Simeon Solomon, in order to reinforce the point that he strongly reflects a certain aspect of Pater's philosophy in his paintings, which relates them tangentially, but nonetheless significantly, to the work of Eliot.[48]

Following the Renaissance revival of the 1860s, Chapter III focuses on the revivals in sculpture during the 1880s. For sculpture was another art medium that bloomed alongside the development of Aestheticism towards the close of the nineteenth century. The Victorians idealised Greek sculpture as the perfect embodiment of the affinity between the physical and the metaphysical.[49] I argue that this material form essentially influenced the creation of representations in both Edward Burne-Jones's painting and Eliot's writing. I select *Middlemarch* (1871-2) as a primary text to explore since it includes substantial references to sculpture and comparisons between the internal realm and the external realm, between corporeality and materiality.

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[48] My initial research for this chapter, in fact, started with a different subject. As I was interested in the very close friendship between Eliot and the Eton master of the time Oscar Browning, and I had aimed to trace the connection between Eliot and the contemporary painter Simeon Solomon. For Solomon was also very close to Oscar Browning and therefore linked indirectly to Eliot. Oscar Browning comments that Solomon's "only true friends apart from artists were Pater and myself whom he really loved and we loved him." [Simon Reynolds*, The Vision of Simeon Solomon* (Slad, Gloucestershire: Catalpa Press, 1985), p. 21.] Solomon and Browning travelled to Rome together in 1870, and the former wrote *A Vision of Love Revealed in Sleep* (1871) there; meanwhile, the latter wrote a letter to George Eliot dated in 1870 from Italy. Eliot replies "Thanks for your kind letter from Rome, which I found on our return home, the other evening" (*Letters,* Vol. V, pp. 92-3). However, there proved to be insufficient resources to concretely connect the pair of George Eliot and Solomon. Although Browning has a significant friendship with both Eliot and Solomon, there is no reference to the latter in the correspondences between Eliot and Browning. Since Eliot began to take interest in the history of Jewish culture and wrote *Daniel Deronda* in 1876, Ray V. Gordon suggests that Eliot might have used Solomon's drawing *Illustrations of Jewish Custom* in *Leisure Hour of* 1866 as a reference for her descriptions of a Jewish family scene in the novel. Yet still, there is no evidence that Eliot actually saw his illustrations. [Ray V, Gordon, *The Illustrator and the Book in England from 1790 to 1914* (New York: Oxford UP, 1976), p. 114.] What emerged from this examination however is the hypothesis that Pater, as another of Solomon's close friends, shares a certain perspective with Eliot.

[49] Michael Hatt, Martina Droth, and Jason Edwards, 'Sculpture Victorious' in Martina Droth, Jason Edwards, and Michael Hatt, eds., *Sculpture Victorious: Art in an Age of Invention, 1837-1901* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2014, pp. 15-55), p. 51.

Sculptural representations by Burne-Jones and Eliot embody their views of metamorphosis both in physical reality and in the interior realm of the mind. In other words, as evident in quotation at the beginning of this introduction Eliot felt in Burne-Jones's painting, *Love among the Ruins,* "a deeper sense of the tremendous outer forces which urge us, than of the inner impulse towards heroic struggle and achievement."[1] Eliot's references to sculpture indicate such interaction between outer forces and inner impulses in the lives of her characters and I analyse the sculptural representations in the novel by considering the writing of Johann Joachim Winckelmann in *History of the Art of Antiquity* (1764). His book not only influenced the aesthetic judgement of nineteenth century thinkers such as Walter Pater but also Freud's analysis of sexual subjectivity.[50] By juxtaposing Winckelmann's aesthetic approach to viewing Greek sculpture with Eliot's visual descriptions of characters in *Middlemarch*, I highlight new aspects emerging in Eliot's representations. Correspondingly, Burne-Jones employs sculptural bodies in his paintings, which in turn influenced young sculptors such as Alfred Gilbert. Burne-Jones's and Gilbert's new approach to sculptural representations becomes one of the historical markers for the metamorphosis of artistic value from a preference for realistic rendering to one for aesthetic rendering.

In Chapter IV, I continue to discuss the scope of the metamorphosis of aesthetic value in relation to Victorian technology. It is Walter Benjamin who linked the dissemination of photography in the nineteenth century with a certain change of

[50] Whitney Davis, *Queer Beauty: Sexuality and Aesthetics from Winckelmann to Freud and Beyond* (New York, Chichester: Columbia UP, 2010), p. 30.

aesthetic values.[51] And this new technology was eminently associated with Pre-Raphaelitism. William Bell Scott compared the art of the Pre-Raphaelites with the accuracy of photography in the following way:

> Every movement has its genesis, as every flower its seed; the seed of the flower of Pre-Raphaelitism was photography. The seriousness and honesty of motive, the unerring fatalism of the sun's action, as well as the perfection of the impression on the eye, was what it aspired to. History, genre, medievalism, or any poetry or literality, were allowable as subject, but the execution was to be like the binocular representations of leaves that the stereoscope was then beginning to show.[52]

By associating Pre-Raphaelitism with stereoscopy and photography, Scott reinforces the modernity of Pre-Raphaelite art that generates not only a sense of the particular visual realisation through the medium of stereoscopy but also an aesthetic spirit of "seriousness and honesty of motive, the unerring fatalism of the sun's action, as well as the perfection of the impression on the eye." In the field of visual culture, the invention of photography highlights concepts of visual verisimilitude, and my final chapter explores the art of photography in relation to Victorian fiction. Despite the fact that Eliot admired the meticulous rendering of early Pre-Raphaelitism, scholars tend to draw their attention to Eliot's dislike of photography. Although there is hardly any reference to photography in her novels, she does mention the medium in her letters. I explore photographical elements in *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) by considering the photography theory of Roland Barthes and Walter Benjamin. Contemporary reviewers perceived photographic effects in Eliot's novels : *The Saturday Review*, for example, described her work as the "photographic reproduction of the life of midland dairies

[51] Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' in *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, trans., J.A Underwood, intro., Anti Chaudhuri (London: Penguin, 2009).
[52] Cited in Smith, *Victorian Photography, Painting and Poetry,* p. 99.

and farm-houses and apple-orchards."[53] However, in this chapter on Eliot and photography, I focus instead on what blurs our interior vision rather than the meticulous physical rendering of the exterior world. I then compare the way in which Eliot and Julia Margaret Cameron represent children and childhood memory by directing their interior eyes to the past in their different media of writing and photography. I consider the changing perception of the past, especially in childhood, and visual representation of children in Eliot's autobiographical novel and Cameron's out of focus photographs. Unlike existing studies of Eliot and nineteenth century visual arts, my thesis moves beyond the theme of realism. By reading Eliot's works in the visually rich context of Pre-Raphaelitism I open up the discussion to include a variety of genres of art that Eliot's work encompassed and in so doing drew significant threads of the web of nineteenth century visual culture.

[53] Cited in Witemeyer, *George Eliot and the Visual Arts,* p. 2.

Chapter I

The Entanglement of "Body's Beauty" and "Soul's Beauty" in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Paintings and George Eliot's Novels

In 1859, Dante Gabriel Rossetti wrote a letter to Elizabeth Gaskell containing the following claim:

> I have read two vols. of *Adam Bede*— a real book as well as a new one. My brother tells me you are in the secret of its authorship—but that is no reason that he or I should be, you will say.[54]

Rossetti was clearly impressed by Eliot's first novel *Adam Bede* published in the same year as his missive. His reference to the authorship question shows his curiosity as to the identity of George Eliot. Later on, Rossetti would meet the author; the friendship between the two is evidenced and substantially recorded in their correspondence and the pair also met in person. This intriguing interaction between these two prominent creative figures of the nineteenth century is worthy of attention.[55] What makes the

[54] *The Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, Vol. II, ed. William E. Freedman (Cambridge: D.S Brewer, 2002) 59.27, p. 263. Elizabeth Gaskell also recommended Eliot's other story 'Janet's Repentance' in *Scenes of Clerical Life* (1858) to Rossetti, and she writes to him that: "But the man or woman is a noble creature. whoever [sic] he or she be—I thought I knew who wrote it, when I saw your brother; but I believe I don't." See *The Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, Vol. II, p. 264.

[55] Jan Marsh, however, is sceptical about the friendship between the two. She writes that Rossetti, like Henry James who notoriously described Eliot as ugly, did not like Eliot and her partner George Henry Lewes. Yet Chapter I focuses on the work of Eliot and Rossetti and their intellectuality, rather than on their mutual friendship. Jan Marsh, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Painter and Poet* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1999), p. 387.

observer of their exchanges and references to each other's work particularly curious is the fact that Rossetti favoured a didactic realist novel such as *Adam Bede* while he was working on one of his most provocative paintings entitled *Bocca Baciata* (1859). The exchange of works and opinions went in both directions: Rossetti sent a copy of his poetry and photographs of his paintings and drawings to the novelist in the 1870s and George Eliot wrote back to him with her comments.[56] Eliot uses a quotation from his book of translation entitled *The Early Italian Poets* (1861) for *Daniel Deronda*,[57] and also praised his sonnets in *The House of Life* (1870-1881). Although the contemporary critic Robert Buchanan notoriously classified Rossetti as an immoral and sensuous artist in his article entitled 'The Fleshly School of Poetry' in *Contemporary Review*, in October 1871,[58] there is little evidence that George Eliot ever regarded Rossetti's work as "immoral." [59]

1870 marks the publication of the first edition of Rossetti's *The House of Life*, which was at the time entitled *Poems*, and Rossetti sent a copy to George Eliot. She reports back to him her impressions on his poetry in the following way:

> … I have received a stronger impression than any fresh poems have for a long while given me, that to read once is a reason for reading again. The Sonnets towards "The House of Life" attract me peculiarly. I feel about them as I do about a new cahier of music which I have been "trying" here and there with the

[56] See footnote 543.
[57] In July 1862, George Smith sent George Eliot a copy of Rossetti's *The Early Italian Poets.* Eliot quotes the passage of a poetry by Guido Guinicelli from Rossetti's translation for the motto of Chapter 61 of *Daniel Deronda*.
[58] Robert Buchanan overtly criticises Rossetti, Swinburne and Simeon Solomon in this article, and his notorious review affected Rossetti's mental health. Houston A Baker suggests that Buchanan is the first critic who defined Rossetti as an aesthetic man. Houston A Baker, 'The Poet's Progress: Rossetti's "The House of Life"' in *Victorian Poetry*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Spring, 1970, pp. 1-14), p. 1.
[59] As Leonée Ormond suggests, Eliot and Lewes seemed disappointed about Buchanan's attack upon Rossetti. Lewes writes in his diary for 3 February 1872: "Letter from Buchanan. Wrote to explain my altered opinion of him." Cited in Leonée Ormond, 'George Eliot and The Victorian Art World' in *The George Eliot Review*: *Journal of the George Eliot Fellowship* (No 36, 2005, pp. 25-38), p. 35.

> delightful conviction that I have a great deal to become acquainted with and to like better and better.[60]

Eliot does not refer to which of Rossetti's sonnets in particular attracted her, yet still this note raises the likelihood that Eliot read both of his sonnets 'Soul's Beauty' and 'Body's Beauty', which are included in the edition sent by Rossetti. These sonnets, which are composed towards his paintings, *Sibylla Palmifera* (1866-70) and *Lady Lilith* (1868) respectively, eminently present Rossetti's conception of life and aesthetics. [61] I especially focus on this pair of sonnets, 'Body's Beauty' and 'Soul's Beauty' and their visual representations, in relation to Eliot's portrayal of female characters. Rossetti's portrayal of women does not necessarily convey a didactic message, but they are, as Jerome McGann suggests, the reflections of his intellectual presence.[62] And Eliot's intellectual reflection is worthwhile juxtaposing with Rossetti's. In so doing, I demonstrate that the Rossetti's concepts of 'Body's Beauty' and 'Soul's Beauty' are, in fact, indicated in Eliot's creation of female characters.

For Rossetti and Eliot, feminine figures are essential subjects that enable them to explore their aesthetic, philosophical and intellectual thoughts and to illustrate the true aspect of human life. Kathy Alexis Psomiades's *Beauty's Body* provides us with significant views on the ideology of Victorian bourgeois femininity. She considers the extreme dichotomisation of the Victorian female ideology, that is the pairs of

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[60] *Letters Vol. V*, p. 93. The first version of the poetry book of 1870 that Rossetti sent to Eliot was not entitled *The House of Life* but *Poems*. Yet the book included a project called 'Sonnets and Songs, toward a work to be called The House of Life'.

[61] In his *Poems* of 1870 version, the two sonnets, 'Soul's Beauty' and 'Body's Beauty' were originally called as the titles of his paintings 'Sibylla Palmifera' and 'Lady Lilith' respectively.

[62] Jerome McGann, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti and The Game that Must be Lost* (New Haven, London: Yale UP, 2000), p.119.

prescribed qualities *within* femininity: virgin/whore, moral/immoral, and spiritual/secular. She points out that: "Femininity is split between surface and depth, knowable exterior appearance and unknowable interior of desire."[63] Rossetti and Eliot were concerned with these double aspects of female ideology and acts of dichotomisation in Victorian society: In the substantial number of female images in his works and his poetry Rossetti continuously addressed these binaries in his own unconventional ways; these dichotomies of female ideology allowed the artist to explore particularly the relationship between visible physicality and invisible spirituality in both image and text. Like Rossetti, Eliot acknowledged these dual aspects of Victorian female ideology, and the female figures she created gave rise to a questioning of the conventional morality: In *Adam Bede*, for example, Eliot claims that one's immediate moral judgement on human behavior is based on the extreme Victorian polarisation of good *versus* bad. In chapter 17, the narrator echoes the prevalent reader's voice and expectations for the characters of novels:

> Let your most faulty characters always be on the wrong side, and your virtuous ones on the right. Then we shall see at a glance whom we are to condemn and whom we are to approve. Then we shall be able to admire, without the slightest disturbance of our prepossessions.[64]

Eliot is sceptical about readers' egoistical demands to understand clearly the division of who the moral and immoral characters are. As the writer acknowledges that fictional characters can be representations that define morality, Eliot avoids giving a direct judgement on her characters. It is especially true for her that the portrayal of the female representations cannot merely be categorised into the sets of evil fallen

[63] Kathy Alexis Psomiades, *Beauty's Body*, p. 5. Psomiades discusses the double views of femininity in relation to the double aspects of art as commodity and the space of autonomy.
[64] *AB*, pp. 151-2.

women and morally correct, spiritual women. Eliot, instead, invites the reader to study her representations considering their different circumstances from different perspectives. Eliot thereby undermines the ready-made didactic dichotomisation and reveals those more complex aspects of morality that underlie human nature. What Eliot strives to achieve by deliberately depicting and reflecting the female ideology within the existing moral dichotomy is to go beyond this polarity that is artificially created and normalised by society.

This chapter thus argues that the feminine representations in both Rossetti's and Eliot's work are in fact significantly connected. I demonstrate that feminine figures become critical mechanisms for the pair to questions one's conventional perceptions of dualisms including body and soul, secular and spiritual, exterior and interior world, and illusion and reality. And this is intimately involved in the pair's attempts at interchange between visual and verbal art. To this end, the discussion that follows examines the dichotomisation of female ideology into two archetypes. I argue that, both Rossetti and Eliot deliberately used the Victorian archetypes of female representations, and then implicitly questioned and challenged this traditional definition. This chapter therefore examines Eliot's and Rossetti's subtle deployment that renders the boundary between these archetypes ambiguous, which is their attempt to reconcile the secular and sacred entity.

Prior to the main discussion, I firstly chart the social context of artists' models in the nineteenth-century in order to emphasise how the prevalent portrayal of women in painting at the time created the particular ideological illusion of femininity. Secondly, I assess the visual representations by Rossetti, especially the images of

Fanny Cornforth and Alexa Wilding. By analysing Eliot's *Adam Bede* and *Daniel Deronda*, I investigate the two different types of female character portrayed by Eliot, which, I suggest, correspond to those employed by Rossetti. Lastly, I examine the ways in which Rossetti and Eliot challenged the traditional dichotomisation of female archetypes by interweaving these opposing constructs.

Reality and Illusion: Victorian Working-class Women and Sacred Representations in Painting

The nineteenth century arts were full of female images, and more than any others it was the Pre-Raphaelite artists that created and disseminated iconic female images. Although the Victorian art world tended towards a sensitive reaction to the depiction of female bodies, in particular their sensuous physiques in art at public events, it made exceptions if they were portrayed in unearthly settings such as classical, mythological, or Biblical contexts. Most of the models for the female nudes depicted in Victorian paintings that represent divine ancient or spiritual figures were, in fact, from the working class. There are well-known anecdotes about how the Pre-Raphaelites approached women on the streets when hunting for their models or "stunners" as they famously called them. Most of the Pre-Raphaelites' muses were spotted by the artists in public spaces such as shops, bars and theatres: They were usually shop assistants, actresses, barmaids, cooks or prostitutes, and the majority of

these models were from the working class.[65] It is clear that these young women alone in public spaces were vulnerable and subject to the fantasies and the will of the gentlemen from a higher socioeconomic standing, who solicited them as models. In fact, Victorian women who appeared on their own in public spaces were at risk of being mistaken for prostitutes too, their actions indicating sexually availability.[66] The link between Pre-Raphaelite painters and the Victorian sex trade is echoed in the way in which the Pre-Raphaelite artists approached their models.

The physique of the working class women depicted transcended a social boundary: On the two dimensional space of the canvas, someone from a lower class became a sacred representation. However, this transcendence remained solely in the representation. Even though a working-class woman was selected to model as Venus or Madonna, she was unlikely to be celebrated nor worshiped in her real life. In fact, she would be considered to have committed an immoral act by society, by exposing her body in front of a male artist.[67] Female representations in the visual arts needed to be illusions that eliminated elements of reality, especially the identity of the models.

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[65] For example, Elizabeth Eleanor Siddall, one of Rossetti's most significant muses, who would become his wife, is believed to have worked at a milliner's as a shop assistant on Cranboure Street in London. When a friend of Walter Deverell's, the young Irish poet, William Allingham, visited the shop, he spotted "Lizzie." Attracted by her appearance, he remembered that his friend, Deverell, was looking for a model for his painting of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night.* Deverell then visited the shop with his mother and asked Siddall to be a model, which led her to meet Rossetti in turn. This account is by F. G. Stephens, a significant art critic in the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. The whole account is cited in Jan Marsh, *The Legend of Elizabeth Siddal* (London and New York: Quartet Books, 1989), p. 41.

[66] For example, Marsh also notes that millinery, where Siddall worked, was associated with "immorality," since young girls working at milliner's stores were believed to be flirtatious and to enjoy gossiping about their male customers from the respectable class, who might give their favorite female workers gifts or take them out on a date. In effect, girls at the milliners were casually assumed to be sexually available by the gentlemen. Jan Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood* (London: Quartet, 1985), p. 24.

[67] Alison Smith states that male models were viewed as uneducated and drunken, and female models were viewed with a mixture of "fascination" and "pity," however, Smith continues that

However, it is Dante Gabriel Rossetti who broke this tradition by depicting the figure of Fanny Cornforth, an ex-prostitute. Cornforth was one of the most significant of Rossetti's muses, yet she was not welcomed by his family members.[68] Although she often accompanied Rossetti and met his artistic and literary friends at Tudor House, she was only permitted to join a male group gathering; she did not participate when "respectable women" attended. As Jan Marsh notes, Cornforth was accepted among men but not among women.[69] Thus the working class women were regarded as a different kind of woman from those of the upper class. Rossetti, however, eliminates the line between the figure of Cornforth, prostitute, and that of an upper class woman in his painting entitled *Bocca Baciata* (1859).

"Bocca Baciata" is from a passage in Boccaccio's *Decameron* in 'Day 2 Story 7.'[70] In this story, Alatiel, the daughter of the Sultan of Babylon, is engaged to the King of the Algarve. When Alatiel travels to marry the king, her ship is wrecked on the coast of Majorca. A nobleman, Pericone da Visalgo saves her and, presuming from her attire that she is from a wealthy family, seduces her. Having lost her virginity and having become a mistress to the nobleman, she is next espied by Marato, his brother. His attraction to her drives him to commit fratricide and kidnap her. A series of such incidents repeatedly happen, and Alatiel is passively sent from one man to another.

"there exist many descriptions of their circumstances and paltry conditions of employment approximating to contemporary accounts of the prostitute. Like prostitution, many women were seen to turn modelling from either sheer need (pay could be as high as 5*s* per sitting) or to satisfy an innate proclivity for display." See Alison Smith, *The Victorian Nude: Sexuality, Morality and Art* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1996), p. 28-29.

[68] For example, his brother, William Michael Rossetti, never responded favorably to Cornforth, in spite of her devotion to Rossetti. See Kirsty Stonell Walker, *Stunner: The Fall and Rise of Fanny Cornforth* (CreateSpace, 2011), pp. 155-158.

[69] Jan Marsh, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Painter and Poet*, p. 263.

[70] Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, trans. Wayne A Rebhorn (New York and London: W. W Norton & Company, 2013).

Ultimately, Alatiel safely arrives to marry the King of the Algarve as originally intended without revealing what has happened during the eventful journey to her wedding; of course it was especially important to conceal that she had not only lost her virginity, but had in fact had numerous sexual experiences.

In the reality of Victorian society, once a woman lost her virginity out of wedlock, she was seen to have "fallen" from any respectable position held. In the middle of the nineteenth century, "fallen women" and prostitutes became popular themes in Victorian narrative painting. The majority of visual representations of "fallen women" or prostitutes highlight the tragic parts of their lives and bear overt didactic implications. Lynda Nead differentiates between prostitutes and fallen women in that: Prostitutes could be "any woman who transgressed the bourgeois code of morality";[71] therefore, they were differentiated from women of the respectable classes. On the other hand, the connotation of the "fallen women," was that the subject was once a member of the respectable class, who has now moved outside of the group, thus "fallen" from the higher social position: "They are victimized and still retain their femininity."[72] Thus the Victorians viewed prostitution, in particular, as a great social evil and a serious political subject of the time. William Acton's book, *Prostitution* (1857), further increased awareness of the issue.[73] Prostitution was thought to threaten society since people believed that it led to the degeneration of the nation by

[71] Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988), pp. 95-96.
[72] Ibid.
[73] William Acton, *Prostitution* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1968). In this book, William Acton notoriously explains the danger of female sexuality as follows: "Gunpowder remains harmless till the spark falls upon it; the match, until struck, retains the hidden fire, so lust remains dormant till called into being by an exciting cause." *Prostitution*, p. 119. Also the contemporary writer W. R. Greg had a similar view of this double standard that legitimated male sexual drive while making female sexual drive illegitimate except for the reproductive reasons.

polluting a sense of morality and the physical health of men with vice and venereal disease.[74] The stereotypes of the prostitute and the fallen woman were particularly important for Victorians to articulate the moral values ascribed. As Nead points out, the delineated female types in visual arts provided the middle class with confirmation and reassurance of their own class identity.[75] For example, Rossetti's painting *Found* (1853-69) and Augustus Egg's triptych *Past and Present* (1858) eminently portray stereotypes of street-walkers and the tragic narrative of fallen women respectively. Visual representations of women in the nineteenth century therefore reinforced the two extreme types: First, the deviant and sexualised types that represented social evils such as prostitution, bringing corruption to men; Second, the divine and moral shown in the female images of innocent virgins and devoted mothers and wives, sacred and moralised middle class types.[76] Meanwhile, prostitution, as overtly demonstrated in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's poem 'Jenny', became an inspiration to explore more in Rossetti's art work. Psomiades observes that for Rossetti, a " [p]rostitute is … the conjunction of two interiorities, the pure/corrupt interiority of women and the erotic desire inside men."[77] Bocca Baciata thereby indicates such an attempt to unify the pure and corrupt elements.

Unlike those Victorian women who lost their virginity out of wedlock and fell from respectable positions, Boccaccio's Alatiel keeps both her respectability and her sexual

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[74] The government introduced The Contagious Disease Acts in 1864, 1866, and 1867. They required prostitutes to be registered and supervised, and to have genital examinations. If disease was found, it had to be cured at a hospital. As historians have indicated the acts implicitly contained the view that supervising female prostitutes could improve the nation's morality as well as men's health. On the other hand, and in line with pervasive sexual double standards, there was no supervision, control nor accusation on the morality of the male clients.

[75] Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, p. 191.

[76] Cherry and Pollock, 'Women as Sign in Pre-Raphaelite literature' in *Vision and Difference*, p. 113.

[77] Psomiades, *Beauty's Body*, p. 42.

seductiveness. The image of Cornforth in *Bocca Baciata* [Fig. 1] indeed encompasses the two opposing aspects in one figure: deviant sexuality and respectability. A portrait of Cornforth, a real prostitute, and a portrait of Alatiel, as a respectable woman, share a common space. Like the character Alatiel, Cornforth was sent from man to man, from Rossetti to a friend of his George Price Boyce, who commissioned this painting: It is believed that there was an unorthodox triangular relationship between the three.[78] As J. B. Bullen notes, the more viewers know about the triangular relationship between Rossetti, Boyce, and Cornforth, the more they realised the sexual implications of the painting.[79] Thus the boundary between the literal content of *Bocca Baciata* and the reality of the circumstances surrounding the model become indistinguishable. Furthermore, by combining the eroticised figure of Cornforth,[80] which represents working class physique, and luxurious costume, which represents upper class women, Rossetti implies the hidden interior desire of a respectable woman. Rossetti outlines what was then regarded as evil, active female sexuality, with the aesthetic and materialistic decoration such as the luxurious accessories and the flowers in the painting. Rossetti explores the possible unions between the sacred and the corrupted.

[78] J. B. Bullen, *Rossetti: Painter and Poet* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2011), p. 121.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Although the painting does not portray nudity, William Holman Hunt criticised it as being "pornographic" and saw in it "animal passion to be the aim of art." Cited in J. B. Bullen, *Pre-Raphaelite Body: Fear and Desire in Painting, Poetry, and Criticism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 93.

Fig. 1

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Bocca Baciata* (1859), oil on panel, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Female Portrayals in the Works of Rossetti and Eliot.

Of all the models of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Elizabeth Siddall, Fanny Cornforth and Jane Morris are particularly well known muses. Rossetti's earlier work eminently projects the dichotomy of physical and spiritual female types in his different portrayals of Cornforth and Siddall. Elizabeth Prettejohn has suggested a unique observation that Rossetti's female images indicate "a neat tripartite scheme: Siddall versus Cornforth, with Burden [Jane] as synthesis."[81] In this scheme, Siddall embodies a concept of spirituality and unearthliness, Cornforth takes the role of sensuous and earthly beauty, and Jane Morris unifies both spirituality and sensuality.

In fact, there is another model that blurs the boundary between the division of earthly and unearthly representations in the work of Rossetti: Alexa Wilding. As Wilding is eliminated from the "tripartite scheme" charted by Prettejohn, she seems to occupy and pose for him from an uncertain position. David G. Riede describes Wilding as "the model Rossetti did not love,"[82] and Bullen notes that "she was a blank screen on which he could project his preoccupation."[83] She rarely had a conversation with Rossetti while the artist was painting her, and was described as having sat quietly, like a "sphinx."[84] Indeed, unlike the other three muses, Wilding did not have a romantic and intimate relationship with Rossetti, nonetheless, the artist created a substantial number of paintings with Wilding as his model. Thus, one could view Wilding as a mere

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[81] Elizabeth Prettejohn, *Rossetti and His Circle* (London: Tate, 1997), p. 10.
[82] David G. Riede, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Limits of Victorian Vision*, p. 262.
[83] Bullen, *Rossetti Painter and Poet*, p. 180.
[84] Marsh, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Painter and Poet*, p. 314.

aesthetic object in relation to Rossetti's aestheticism. Psomiades distinguishes Wilding from the other models such as Siddall, Cornforth, and Morris, and points out that the latter three had a "real relationship" with Rossetti, thus his paintings of them preserved his artistic autonomy: On the other hand, his use of Wilding as model gradually increased the element of the marketability of his paintings as aesthetic commodities, as his patrons preferred the face of Wilding.[85]

Rossetti's images of Wilding show a fascinating contrast and interweaving with those of Cornforth in *Lady Lilith*, *Sibylla Palmifera* and *Venus Verticordia*, and those of Siddall and Morris in *The Blessed Damozel*. In some works, Rossetti repainted Wilding's face onto representations originally modelled by Cornforth. The images of Wilding, in fact, indicate a significant transition from realism to aestheticism through which Rossetti experiments with his aesthetic conceptions and show the construction of his ideas about the worship of beauty. His female representations thus make the viewer contemplate the borderline between the figures as the actual objects of Rossetti's desire and his aesthetic and materialistic representations, which intensifies the effect. In other words, Rossetti's female representations constantly raise the question for us of the boundary between reality and illusion in Rossetti's life. In this regard, it is most intriguing to assess the way in which Rossetti represents Wilding. Non-fictional elements, the romantic, sexual or spiritual relationships between Rossetti and Siddall, Cornforth, and Jane Morris, have often been linked to the verisimilitude of his passionate, spiritual and sexual desire in their portraits. What then by comparison can we find in the figure of Wilding with whom Rossetti was not intimately connected?

[85] Psomiades, *Beauty's Body*, pp.118-119.

As already noted, Cornforth tends to be viewed according to her sexual relationship with Rossetti while Wilding occupies a more materialistic relationship as a business partner. Paradoxically, Rossetti himself seemed to construct and distinguish Siddall and Cornforth representations as being spiritual on the one hand and sensuous on the other. But in the figure of Wilding, his experiment of fusing of the two opposing elements became pronounced. Rossetti's female figures in paintings of the 1860s are divided into two types: One represents sensuous beauty associated with the sexualised archetype of women, which I shall call "Body's Beauty," from the title of his sonnet attributed to his painting *Lady Lilith*; the other type represents spiritual beauty associated with divine representations, which I shall call "Soul's Beauty," likewise a Rossetti sonnet attributed to a painting, in this case *Sibylla Palmifera*.

The female characters in the novels of George Eliot are analogous to the blueprint of Rossetti's female types: There are similar renderings of female protagonists in most of Eliot's novels; once more the characters represent "Body's Beauty" and "Soul's Beauty." Judith Mitchell and Barbara Hardy point out that her novels convey a significant formation of female pairs: Hetty Sorrel and Dinah Morris in *Adam Bede*; Lucy Dean and Maggie Tulliver in *The Mill on the Floss*; Tessa and Romola de' Bardi in *Romola;* Rosamond Vincy and Dorothea Brooke in *Middlemarch*; and Mirah Lapidoth and Gwendolen Harleth in *Daniel Deronda*.[86] While some such as Hetty, Rosamond and Gwendolen, are represented with particular physical attractiveness, or as self-consciously beautiful, others, on the other hand such as

[86] Barbara Hardy, *The Novels of George Eliot: A Study in Form* (London: The Athlone Press, 1959), pp. 80-81; Judith Mitchell, 'George Eliot and the Problematic of Female Beauty' in *Modern Language Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Summer, 1990, pp. 14-28), p. 17.

Dinah, Dorothea, and Mirah are idealised and not so aware of their own feminine beauty. Eliot highlights instead their sacred and innocent elements. In fact, in Eliot's novels the pairs of opposing female characters experience their most significant interactions during the later parts of the plots, and these meetings lend to each character a new realisation of their unknown qualities, as represented by their counterpart. I consider these interactions to be pivotal points in the novels in which the archetypical characters go beyond the boundaries their representations imply and reveal the multi-faceted elements of human nature. As with Rossetti's female representations, Eliot deliberately emphasises the constructed polarity of Victorian female types, whore *versus* virgin, physical *versus* spiritual. Yet Eliot attempts to transfer this pervasive dichotomy into a new realm of realisation for the reader. And the construction of female characters became more elaborated in her last novel *Daniel Deronda*, especially in the figure of Gwendolen Harleth.

Rossetti and Eliot both believed the dichotomy to be an illusion obscuring the truth, and both desired to pursue a revelation of the true aspects of human nature through a celebration of human beauty and true divinity in human nature with a concomitant questioning of contemporary aesthetic and ethical values in pervasive, illusionistic, and misleading representations.

Visual Manifestation of Body's Beauty

Rossetti's portraits of women representing "Body's Beauty" indicate the relationship between the surface of exterior and the depth of interior worlds. Rendering the concept of life through the form of female figures in an overtly materialistic manner is one of the most essential components of Rossetti's art during the 1860s. For the artist, to portray beautiful women functions not only as the presentation of his conception of aesthetics but also as the articulation of a conflict between the subjective and objective, or between interior and exterior worlds. Rossetti's "Body's Beauty" is thereby the projection of the interior fantasy and subjective perceptions that, he believes, essentially constitute one's life.

An idea that Rossetti noted for a composition that he did not in the end produce was, "Venus surrounded by mirrors, reflecting her in different views."[87] This conception epitomises his experimental rendering of female beauty, especially, the creation of "Body's Beauty" in the 1860s. An image of Venus, a symbol of beauty, love and sex, reflected by mirrors from different angles conveys multiplicity in a single figure.[88] His interest in multi-dimensionality and his use of the mirroring effect would also put focus on the relationship between the perception of exterior reality and the multiplied illusion of self-image. Scholars have drawn their attention to Rossetti's frequent use of mirrors in relation to his identity. J. Hillis Miller, for example, states that Rossetti's female figures reflect the artist's loss of identity:[89] Bullen points out

[87] *The Work of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, ed. William M. Rossetti (London: Ellis, 1911), p. 615.
[88] McGann, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Game that Must be Lost*, p. 106.
[89] J. Hillis Miller, 'The Mirror's Secret: Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Double Work of Art' in *Victorian Poetry,* Vol. 29, No. 4 (Winter, 1991, p. 333-349), p. 339.

that "[Rossetti's] canvas is a 'mirror', which reflects back the feminised self of the creator."[90] Female representations can become the representational portrayal of the artist himself, reflecting his sexual and masculine desire, yet giving rise to a question of the division between reality and artifice.

Rossetti had Fanny Cornforth photographed by photographer William Downey at Tudor House in 1863.[91] When photographing his mistress, they took a large mirror from the bedroom into the garden, and the composition is elaborately set in order to emphasise the model's original beauty and her reflection in the mirror. [Fig. 2] This rare photographic portrait of Cornforth arranged by Rossetti resonates with his imagining of Venus reflected by mirrors in different views, with *Fazio's Mistress* (1863) painted in the same year he photographed Cornforth, and with *Lady Lilith* painted in 1868. In all of these pieces, mirrors are used as an additional, augmenting medium. Rossetti technically succeeded to present his muse in different views: In the photograph of Cornforth, the model is leaning on the mirror which elaborately exhibits the other side of her in the reflection produced. The left side of Cornforth presents her physique, especially her sensuous thick neck that absorbs much light, while in contrast her reflection in the mirror presents the other side shadowed. Both of the figures, the physical and the reflected, in spite of being presented at different angles, appear to be unified into one aesthetic entity. This mirror reflection for Rossetti demonstrates the dualism of surface and depth, the reflected self reduced into a flat and original self.

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[90] J.B. Bullen, 'Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Mirror of Masculine Desire' in *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, Vol. 2 (No. 13, 1999, pp. 324-352), p. 332.

[91] Interestingly, Rossetti also attempted to photograph his *Bocca Baciata*. In his letter to Boyce, he writes: "Would you lend me *Bocca* [sic] tomorrow to have her photographed by a photographer who is coming here for the day/ Please let me know by return & I will send for her." See *The Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, Vol. III, p. 60.

Fig. 2

William Downey and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Fanny Cornforth* (1863), collodion, Wilmington Society of Fine Arts, Delaware

Rossetti's fascinations with the other self in mirrors and the relationship between the perception of reality and illusion can be seen in his poem, 'The Portrait' (1870) in the following lines:[92]

> This is her picture as she was:
> It seems a thing to wonder on,
> As though mine image in the glass
> Should tarry when myself am gone.[93]

Here the speaker recognises himself in the image of the woman. Lindsay Smith has added new elements to the discussion of mirror reflection in Rossetti's work by linking it to the experience of seeing photographs of oneself.[94] Roland Barthes defines the invention of photography as "the advent of myself as other: a cunning disassociation of consciousness from identity."[95] In other words, the invention of photography in the nineteenth century revealed new perspectives for individuals that they would otherwise be incapable of recognising.[96] While one's own image in a photograph produces realisations such as that "this is not me" or "this looks better than the original," it creates a new psychological experience of the other as part of oneself.[97] Although we are never able to see ourselves without the things that relay the image, we compare what we think we look like to our own representations in photography.

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[92] Miller, 'The Mirror's Secret: Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Double Work of Art' in *Victorian Poetry*.
[93] *The Works*, p. 169.
[94] Lindsay Smith, *Pre-Raphaelitism: Poetry and Painting* (Devon: Writers and Their Work, 2013), p. 59.
[95] Roland Barth, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (London: Vintage Books, 2000), p. 12.
[96] Smith, *The Politics of Focus: Women, Children and Nineteenth-century Photography* (Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 1998).
[97] Smith, *Pre-Raphaelitism: Poetry and Painting,* p. 60. Also see her discussion ' "Me and My Shadow": the Double in Nineteenth-Century Photography' in *The Politics of Focus: Women, Children and Nineteenth-century Photography,* pp. 74-94), p.79.

Rossetti is fascinated with this psychological provocation towards these reflected selves on the external surface.

For Rossetti, the new sensation evoked by photography of another self resembles the sensations that the painter felt from female beauty represented on canvas. In one of his sonnets 'Life-In-Love'(XXXVI) in *The House of Life*, he writes "Not in thy body is thy life at all/ But in this lady's lips and hands and eyes;/ Through these she yields thee life that vivifies/ What else were sorrow's servant and death's thrall."[98] This sonnet shows a realisation of the male self in specific female body parts. Like the other self in a photograph, such particular elements of female physique as the provocative female lips, hands and eyes, for Rossetti, become essential media to know of another self. Rossetti's portraits of "Body's Beauty" entice complex psychological contemplation on illusion and unity between true representations and another self.

Lady Lilith (1868-73) [Fig. 3] is the culmination of the essence of "Body's Beauty" and of Rossetti's elaborate deployment of illusion. The first wife of Adam, Lilith, abandons him and chooses to live with demons; as a consequence of the loss of her own babies, she kills others' infants as act of revenge. In the first painting of Lady Lilith, completed in 1868, Rossetti used Cornforth as the model. The roundness of her physique is celebrated, with her double chin and her curvy form from the shoulder to the bosom realistically depicted; this conveys the presence of Lilith, cloaked with tangible human corpulence whilst her true evil soul is hidden underneath.

The painting was later reworked, however: Rossetti transposed the head from the face of Cornforth to that of Alexa Wilding in 1872, as requested by his important

[98] *The Works*, p. 86.

patron, the shipping magnate Frederic Leyland. [Fig. 4] In the repainted version, the portrayal is more ethereal and the focus on the overtly sexualised human physique is reduced.

The second version with the visage of Wilding emphasises an aspect of grotesque artificiality. Each body part seems out of proportion, even distorted. The figure's posture appears more unnatural than in the first version as there is a disconnection between the upper and lower body. The perspective used to delineate the two parts appears to be constructed from different angles. The figure is overtly aestheticized. In the figure based upon Wilding, her sharp chin alongside a bizarrely extended long and thick neck and masculine shoulders gives the impression of an artificial, marble-like, hard surface, and distinctive outlines in comparison with Cornforth's curvy, natural and harmonious flesh. The facial expression in the second version appears indifferent, and yet her snake-like eyes are fixed on her own reflection in her hand mirror. In the second version, the Lilith figure is completely absorbed in herself while staring at her own image whereas the figure in the first version looks slightly above the mirror and appears less self-obsessed. Thus narcissism becomes more pronounced in the second version, in which Lilith seems to be more aware of her poisonous beauty and capacity to seduce a man and bring him to death.

For Rossetti, narcissism represents the ambiguity between illusion and reality, exterior surface and interior depth. In the second version, the distorted rendering of the physique appears designed to reflect our distorted view that her beauty generates. *Lady Lilith* is accompanied by the sonnet entitled 'Body's Beauty':

Fig.3

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Lady Lilith* (1867), watercolour, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Fig. 4

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Lady Lilith* (1872-3) oil, Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington

> And still she sits, young while the earth is old,
> And, subtly of herself contemplative,
> Draws men to watch the bright web she can weave,
> Till heart and body and life are in its hold.[99]

She sits still, but not as a passive object. Instead, she is seductively drawing men to watch her; Lilith is willing to be fixed in their gaze as a worshipped object and she ensnares male viewers around her. In the painting of Lilith absorbed in her own beauty, the viewer's eye is drawn to this mysterious expression. In the sonnet, Rossetti describes that Lilith weaves. Like the lady weaving a web in Tennyson's 'Lady of Shallot', Lilith also weaves "the bright web" that appears as a flower crown in the second version of the painting. As Psomiades notes, Lilith is both an artist and art object.[100] She "draws" men, in other words, she portrays the viewer's subjective and erotic fantasy. The viewer of the painting assumes that they command the object by viewing it, but in fact Lilith creates the visual web that dominates the viewer's contemplation.

In this painting, there are two mirrors depicted: One is the hand mirror held by Lilith and the other is the mirror on the dressing table. The viewer cannot know what Lilith finds in her hand mirror. The back side of the black hand mirror facing towards the viewer indicates inaccessibility to the interior world of Lilith. The second mirror of a dressing table with two candles at the left side backdrop becomes, as David G. Riede points out, like an altar, thus it connotes a new worship and religion for her materialistic beauty.[101] Lilith's narcissism and her admiration for her own beauty are sublimated into a cultic quality. This altar-like mirror reflects the view outside her

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[99] *The Works*, p. 100.
[100] Psomiades, *Beauty's Body*, p. 127.
[101] Riede, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Limits of Victorian Vision*, p. 254.

bower. However, the natural, living landscape becomes flattened, materialised, and lifeless in its mirroring, which corresponds to the nature of Lilith. Indeed, Rossetti explained in a letter of 1870 that his Lady Lilith "represent[s] a Modern Lilith."[102] Thus, she is not a Biblical Lilith but a modern Lilith, to which the artist wills the viewer to be drawn. The painting produces relaying images in that Lilith's fascination with her own beauty becomes another reflection of our irresistible fascination with Lilith and Lilith's web. As in his sonnet 'Life-In-Love' mentioned earlier, Lilith's seductive body parts including eyes, hands, and lips, provide the male viewers a sense that their souls and bodies are vivified, thus they need to depend on the illusion of this female other as their new self. However, in doing this, Lilith brings them death.

George Eliot's Body's Beauty

As in the works of Rossetti, George Eliot's characters representing themes of "Body's Beauty" embody perspectives that destabilise the relationship between reality and delusion through the medium of mirroring.[103] Most of Eliot's beautiful and seductive characters are satisfied with, or living in, the view of the two-

[102] Cited in Virginia M. Allen, ' "One Strangling Golden Hair": Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Lady Lilith' in *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 66, No. 2 (June, 1984, pp. 285-294), p. 286.

[103] George Eliot eminently explains the relationship between the illusion of the mirror and self-recognition in chapter 27 of *Middlemarch* which epitomises her view of the way in which individuals perceive external reality: " Your pier-glass or extensive surface of polished steel made to be rubbed by a housemaid, will be minutely and multitudinously scratched in all directions; but place now against it a lighted candle as a centre of illumination, and lo! the scratches will seem to arrange themselves in a fine series of concentric circles round that little sun. It is demonstrable that the scratches are going everywhere impartially, and it is only your candle which produces the flattering illusion of a concentric arrangement, its light falling with an exclusive optical selection. These things are a parable. The scratches are events, and the candle is the egoism of any person now absent— of Miss Vincy, for example." *M*, p. 297.

dimensionalised reflection in the mirror. Their recognition of the exterior world is defined by their egoistic way of viewing the world.

The character of "Body's Beauty"as I have thus far been considering it is represented by Hetty Sorrel in *Adam Bede*. Through the character, Eliot does not simply condemn her vanity and egoism but portrays an illusion of human perspective. Eliot repeatedly delineates Hetty's physical attractions, especially by emphasising that she is an ideal figure for visualisation or painting. After Captain Arthur Donnithorne meets Hetty at her dairy, he mentions that "If I were an artist, I would paint her."[104] More specifically, like a Pre-Raphaelite artist, he spots this working class woman, and thereafter he freely fantasises about her and idealises her in his imaginative canvas. In doing so, Donnithorne blurs the boundary between his sexual motivation and an artistic inspiration, indicated in the words "If I were an artist." Furthermore, like the emphasis placed in Rossetti's paintings with Fanny Cornforth, Hetty Sorrel's alluring, round, plump physique is described graphically and distinctively sexualised in the novel. For example, when Donnithorne visits and enters the dairy where Hetty works as a maid, the portrayal of her focuses on her physical movements as if the narrator takes a male point of view, specifically that of Donnithorne. The narrator admires the girl making butter while observing the "tossing movements that give a charming curve to the arm, and a sideward inclination of the round white neck; little parting and rolling movements with the palm of the hand."[105] The narrator describes Hetty's butter making as "the one performance of hers."[106] Her seductive body parts such as her curvy arms, round white neck, and hand are emphasised as aesthetic objects to

[104] *AB*, p. 86.
[105] Ibid., p. 72.
[106],Ibid.

worship. For Donnithorne, the dairy is transformed into the stage of a fantasy in which he sexualises the young girl and Hetty becomes a performer for the gentleman viewer. Thus Eliot repeatedly depicts Hetty's body parts, cheeks, dimples, curved arm, and white neck as if these exteriorities alone compose the existence of Hetty; the visual accessibility of her physique, in fact, blurs her hidden depth of vanity.

Eliot associates female representations of "Body's Beauty" with narcissism. Hetty bears an analogy with the painting of *Lady Lilith* by Rossetti: She enjoys viewing her reflection in a mirror at her bower while fantasizing about the gaze of her admirers. In fact, Hetty has a web/net that, like Rossetti's Lilith, draws, as the narrator states that: "Hetty took care to entice him[Adam] back into the net by little airs of meekness and timidity, as if she were in trouble at his neglect."[107] Moreover, there is a strong link between the story of Lilith in Judaic myth and that of Hetty. Despite giving her consent to marry Adam, Hetty abandons him and travels in search of Donnithorne; during this time, she abandons and kills her newborn baby.

Like *Lady Lilith*, the way in which Hetty worships herself is, as the narrator alludes to, the act of "religious rites."[108] This scene where Hetty contemplates her beauty while looking a mirror eminently reminds us of Rossetti's Lilith. In the evening, Hetty locks the door, in case her aunt Mrs. Poyser opens it and she lights the two candles in the brass sockets on each side of the looking-glass on a dressing table. The mirror becomes a sacred altar at which Hetty can worship her own beauty in the manner of Rossetti's Lilith. Furthermore, she has another mirror, a red-framed shilling looking

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[107] *AB*, p. 84.
[108] Ibid., p. 127. See also Reva Stump, *Movement and Vision in George Eliot's Novels* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1959), p. 25.

glass that she secretly bought, and she sits and stares at herself in this shilling looking glass while "making herself look like that picture of a lady in Miss Lydia Donnithorne's dressing room."[109] Her thoughts are occupied by her beauty and also by Donnithorne whose gaze convinces her of her sexual attractiveness: "Hetty looked at herself tonight with quite a different sensation from what she had ever felt before; there was an invisible spectator whose eye rested on her like morning on the flowers."[110] Thus, in addition to herself as viewer, Hetty fantasises about this "invisible spectator" who looks at her. As she gets ready for bed, she starts dressing herself in large earrings and a black lace scarf imagining that Donnithorne will be glad to see her in such beautiful dress. Being held in the gaze of a male viewer sparks the appearance of female sexuality,[111] and in other words, the realisation of the presence of a male gaze leads to the advent of another self for Hetty.[112] She views herself from the point of view of Donnithorne and this also anticipates the theory of John Berger that "the surveyor of woman in herself is male."[113] Yet the beauty of Hetty sparks illusions not only in the minds of her male admirers such, as Donnithorne and Adam Bede, but also in that of Hetty herself. She enjoys being a physical object to be seen by men: "Hetty was quite used to the thought that people liked to look at her."[114] Her beauty that dominates the male gaze generates the illusion of her powerful presence and her world relies on this physical effect on people.

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[109] *AB*, p. 128.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Caroline Levine, 'Women or Body? Gender, Realism and the Gaze in Adam Bede' in *Women's Writing,* Vol. 3, No. 2 (1996, pp. 113-127).
[112] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*: *Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (London: Vintage Books, 2000).
[113] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin, 2008), p. 41.
[114] *AB*, p. 82.

Moreover, Hetty is an illusion to the viewer too. Adam loves Hetty, yet the narrator notes his inability to detect Hetty's hidden vanity. He is attracted to Hetty, because in his ignorance Adam imprudently links the emotion that Hetty's seductive appearance evokes to his true love for Hetty. Thus Hetty's superficiality reflects Adam's subjective apprehension. Eliot's deliberate descriptions of the physical traits of Hetty prevent Adam and the readers from accessing the depth and interiority of her vanity, while emphasising her presence as being superficial and shallow, mere reflections of the mirror.

Eliot suggests our lack of understanding of Hetty and this is indicated the communication between Hetty and Dinah. The depth of Hetty's desire and self-love, although analogous to the reflection of a mirror, is deeper than we and Dinah imagine. Hetty does not understand Dinah's spiritual talks, because "Dinah was a riddle to her"[115] and her words merely frighten Hetty. Dinah, on the other hand, does not understand the nature of Hetty's vanity and materialistic desire. Dinah steadfastly views Hetty's love of pleasure as sin under God's instruction. Although Dinah's spiritual mind can be a higher entity, Eliot shows her inability to deal with the earthly nature of Hetty's egoism. Dinah thus fails to recognise to what extent Hetty understands her spiritual language.[116] Moreover, Dinah's religious asceticism prevents her from feeling her own earthly desire as well as a multitude of complex human emotions that would tangibly link her to the external world. In other words, Dinah fails to access the corresponding depth to the more overt narrowness of Hetty. Dinah, although she delivers a spiritual message as a preacher cannot unravel the earthly riddle presented

[115] *AB*, p. 121.
[116] Stump, *Movement and Vision in George Eliot's Novels*, p. 5.

in Hetty. Both moralistic Adam and religious Dinah cannot access Hetty's world but only her surface, thus they end up creating their own limited understanding of Hetty. And Eliot implicitly portrays other peoples' subjective worlds though their interactions with Hetty. Thus like Rossetti's Lilith, Hetty represents the illusion of accessibility of surface and inaccessibility of hidden interior worlds that complete a human being; her beauty merely gives the viewers the illusion that they understand her.

Rossetti's "Soul Beauty": Materialising the Soul's Beauty

As for the portrayal of "Body's Beauty," can links be found between the creation of the female representation of "Soul's Beauty" by Rossetti and that of Eliot? In the following discussion, I demonstrate that Rossetti and Eliot attempt to make the sacred representations/characters of "Soul's Beauty" secular. Eliot embodies the worship of humanity within her female characters, whereas Rossetti visualises the worship of female beauty. Eliot illuminates the spiritual presence shadowed by physical reality, whereas Rossetti illuminates spiritual feeling, through physical images. Furthermore, in so doing, both reinforce their own "Soul's Beauty" with their art or text.

In his well-known essay 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' Walter Benjamin analyses the development of art in relation to the technological development of reproductions. He observes that while the contexts of ritual, religion and culture, which were concomitantly underlined in art objects, were "emancipated",

the value of "display" emerged.[117] In the nineteenth century, the new value given to the role of displaying visual art, as Benjamin states, was further developed in the rise of both photography and aestheticism.[118] Both types of female images produced by Rossetti reflect such new aesthetic value functioning as representation for the sake of visual display. Yet what Rossetti additionally contrives to do is to revive the spiritual or ritual element of worship in the secular world. Rossetti particularly admired the visual rendering of spirituality and religious sentiment in medieval art and his interpretation of "truth to nature" was derived from primitive art before the style of Raphael became predominant. Although, medieval and early Italian art lacked the manipulative technique of perspective, Rossetti regards their manner not simply as mere visual representations but as faithful transcriptions of religious and sacred feeling, which he also wished to achieve. As Roland Barthes remarks, pictures by primitive artists do not present "a concept represented in the image, but the image itself presents spirituality."[119] Medieval arts for Rossetti thus show the direct marriage of spiritual feeling and visual representation. As demonstrated in the earlier religious paintings of Rossetti, including *The Girlhood of Virgin Mary* (1848-9) and *Ecce Ancilla Domin!* (1849-50), his lack of academically trained skill was one of the aspects of his art most criticised; he was especially criticised for his failure to employ perspective to give an illusion of three-dimensional space.[120] However, McGann argues that Rossetti "saw a meaning in the non-illusionistic symbols."[121] As the scholar points out, the artist is

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[117] Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' in *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, trans., J. A. Underwood with intro. Amit Chaudhuri (London: Penguin, 2009, pp. 228-258), p. 238.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Roland Barthes, *Image Music Text* (London: Fontanna Press, 1977), p. 24.
[120] McGann, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Game that Must be Lost,* p. 106; p. 110.
[121] Ibid., p. 115.

"anti-illusionist" being sceptical about the pervasive obsession with creating an illusion of three dimensional space through the use of perspective in painting.[122] Rossetti desires to embody the sheer primitive feelings of worship, desire, and devotion for a sacred entity within the physical manifestation of his work. He, thus, obsessively attempts to uncover the beauty of the soul through the depiction of a variety of human and physical/material forms.

In observing Rossetti's concept of "Soul's Beauty," his sonnets more directly illustrate one's spiritual feelings in relation to arts. As the visual manifestation of one's soul was a significant theme for the artist, the verbal expressions simultaneously play a vital role to transcend the limitation of our optical perception. His poem 'The Portrait' reads : "O Love! let this my lady's picture glow/Under my hand to praise her name, and show/Even of her inner self the perfect whole"[123]; and the sonnet continues in the following way.

> Lo! it is done. Above the long lithe throat
> The mouth's mould testifies of voice and kiss,
> The shadowed eyes remember and foresee.
> Her face is made her shrine. Let all men note
> That in all years (O Love, thy gift is this!)
> They that would look on her must come to me. [124]

Although the artist in the poem states his desire to show his lady's "inner self the perfect whole," what the speaker describes next are the specific parts of the lady's face such as the long lithe throat, the mouth, and the shadowed eyes. And he declares that her face becomes a shrine. Thus to paint his beloved, or deceased beloved, is to

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[122] See McGann's commentary on the photography of Cornforth in *Rossetti Archive*, http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/sa223.rap.html [accessed Jan. 2015]
[123] *The Works*, p. 78.
[124] Ibid.

make a sacred location where his soul can dwell. In another sonnet, 'Her Gifts', Rossetti more overtly compares a lady's body parts to a location in such ways as "such thrilling pallor of cheek"; "Deep golden neck, meet column of Love's shrine to cling to when the heart takes sanctuary." As Walter Pater rightly compares Rossetti's *The House of Life* to "Haunted House,"[125] the painted female faces for Rossetti become sacred places where male souls can enter and unite with her.

In 1866, commissioned by George Rae of Birkenhead,[126] Rossetti commenced painting *Sibylla Palmifera* using Alexa Wilding as his model. [Fig. 5] He made this painting as the "Soul's Beauty," a companion piece to *Lady Lilith* as the "Body's Beauty," which, as we have seen, Alexa Wilding also modelled. Rossetti wrote the sonnet 'Soul's Beauty' to accompany this painting later. In painting *Sibylla Palmifera,* he excitedly reports his progress to his patron: "It is from a glorious new model of mine and will be the very best of the sort I ever did..."[127] As Wilding's beauty was the primary motivation for Rossetti to paint her, she became equivalent to elements of the Venetian school, in which the focus on physical beauty aimed to "display" and please the viewer's eyes. This so called materialistic relationship between Rossetti and Wilding testifies to his creation of new aesthetic and decorative values in painting without exploring or portraying the depth of the model's individuality.

Although Rossetti emphasises Wilding's appearance as spiritually beautiful in *Sibylla Palmifera*, her physical beauty is what predominantly attracts the viewer's attention. The figure of a Sybil, who delivers the prophecy, reposes in front of a marble

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[125] *Appreciations,* p. 214.
[126] George Rae, a Liverpudlian stockbroker, was one of the Rossetti's significant patrons who also commissioned his painting *The Beloved* (1866).
[127] Cited in Mary Bennett, *Artists of the Pre-Raphaelite Circle: The First Generation* (London: National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, Lund Humphries, 1988), p. 170.

canopied niche holding a palm sceptre. However, there is no obvious narrative in this painting, which shows only the portrait of Wilding. Her costume is less decorative, nonetheless, the sensuous red colour of the gown draws the viewer's attention and thus it still becomes visually provocative.

Rossetti embellishes *Sibylla Palmifera* with a sonnet called 'Soul's Beauty'. It is known that Rossetti first painted a subject and then wrote its corresponding sonnet. It directly explains the painting in its first few lines:

> Under the arch of Life, where love and death,
> Terror and mystery, guard her shrine, I saw
> Beauty enthroned; and though her gaze struck awe,
> I drew it in as simply as my breath. [128]

The physical presence of "Soul's Beauty" is indicated by the detailed description of the space. Then the next line "I saw/ Beauty enthroned" highlights "Soul's Beauty" as something visible, in contrast to the rest of the sonnet, in which Rossetti attempts to convey its spiritual presence in an abstract form rather than through its literal appearance. There are butterflies behind the figure in the painting, and these creatures are traditional symbols of human souls. As Pollock suggests, the sonnet describes beauty as "enthroned" or "enshrined." In other words, her beauty obtains authoritative status or divine material form analogous to the way in which statues commemorate the dead and celebrate saints.[129] Rossetti makes material and immortalises female beauty by enshrining it, yet simultaneously attempts to urge the

[128] *The Works*, p. 100.
[129] Pollock, *Vision and Difference,* p. 146.

Fig. 5

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Sibylla Palmifera* (1865-70), oil, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight.

viewer to conceive spiritual and ritual sentiment manifested by this shrine of beauty. As in the sonnet of 'Body's Beauty', Rossetti uses the significant word "draw" in ambivalent meanings in the sonnet above.[130] To draw women, for the painter, provides himself a soul/breath. Rossetti attempts to blend the value of the spiritual and the materialistic elements in displaying his object of worship and. F. W. H. Myers describes Rossetti's women as "…the sacred pictures of a new religion: forms and faces which bear the same relation to that mystical worship of beauty on which we have dwelt so long."[131] And while Walter Benjamin views the gradual elimination of ritual and spiritual purpose in art objects, Rossetti regards "Soul's Beauty" as endorsing an individual religion and the worship of aesthetics through the monuments of female faces. Likewise, the sonnets also become monuments for souls: As he writes in the beginning of *The House of Life* of 1880: "A Sonnet is a moment's monument,—/ Memorial from the Soul's eternity/ To one dead deathless hour."[132]

Eliot's Soul's Beauty: Humanising Soul's Beauty.

Like Rossetti, Eliot is also "anti-illusionist," yet this does not mean that she does not idealise or aesthetise reality in her work. As noted, in spite of the lack of technical skill evidenced in Italian primitive arts, Rossetti perceives in these works the power of true devotion and worship represented without any contamination of the academic art

[130] McGann, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Game that Must be Lost,* p.81.
[131] Cited in Pollock, *Vision and Difference,* p. 125.
[132] *The Works*, p.74.

tradition.[133] On the other hand, Eliot views the meticulous depictions of the lower classes in Flemish art as the embodiment of a true worship of humanity. The novelist admired the devotional eyes of Flemish artists for common people such as the peasant figures in the paintings. Her admiration is clearly stated in chapter 17 of *Adam Bede* in which she articulates and gives value to the elements of divinity and spirituality in human nature.[134] In her review of John Ruskin's *Modern Painters III* in *The Westminster Review* in 1856, Eliot also mentions religious art in the following passage:

> The want of realization in the early religious painters prevented their pictures from being more than suggestion to the feelings. They attempted to express, not the actual fact, but their own enthusiasm about the fact; they covered the Virgin's dress with gold, not with any idea of representing her as she ever was or will be seen, but with a burning desire to show their love for her. [135]

Although Eliot is a devoted follower of realism, idealisation in religious works is not necessarily anathema to her; it is acceptable as long as such elements are subsumed into the power of devotion, passion and "a burning desire" for sacred entities innate to human beings. As Witemeyer maintains, Eliot does not disagree with idealisation,[136] and she idealises humanity. For her, the power of worship and admiration for not only the saints, but also human beings, is an essential element and needs to be manifested in her realism. Eliot emphasises such a position in her delineation of her "Soul's Beauty."

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[133] McGann, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Game that Must be Lost,* p. 7.
[134] Her view was also influenced by a German Scholar Ludwing Feuerbach, and she translated his writing *das Wesen des Christenthums* (*The Essence of Christianity*) into English. See Kerry McSweeney, ' "Middlemarch": Art, Ideas, Aesthetics' in *Middlemarch: George Eliot*, ed. John Peck (London: Macmillan, 1992, pp. 19-32).
[135] *George Eliot: Selected Essays, Poems and Other Writings,* eds. A.S Byatt and Nicholas Warren (London: Penguin, 1990), pp.72-73.
[136] Witemeyer, *George Eliot and the Visual Arts*, p. 73.

In *Adam Bede* "Soul's Beauty" is represented by Dinah Morris. She is carefully distinguished from, yet simultaneously analogous to Hetty, the representation of "Body's Beauty" in the novel. The appearance of Dinah, like that of Hetty, draws the male viewer's attention yet in a different way. Captain Donnithorne compares her to an idealised figure: " 'She looked like St. Catherine in a Quaker dress. It's a type of face one rarely sees among our common people.'"[137] The image of St. Catherine was especially known from the painting by Raphael, *Saint Catherine of Alexandria*, and Witemeyer notes that the painting was an earlier favourite of Eliot, which she referred to in her other novels.[138] [Fig.6] Eliot was aware that such a Biblical figure was generally idealised and not typically invoked in discussion of the lives of common people. Concerning the comparison between Dinah and St. Catherine, one needs to bear in mind that significantly it is made by Captain Donnithorne, who tends to idealise female figures and habitually romanticises reality.[139] While rendering the sacredness of Dinah through an idealised representation, such as the analogy to St. Catherine, Eliot makes sure to indicate the coexistence of human and sacred aspects of her character. Eliot does not state any visual likeness between Dinah and the famous image of St Catherine etched into consciousness by Raphael. In Raphael's *St. Catherine*, what draws the viewer's attention is her soft and white hands. Meanwhile, Dinah is not a saint, rather she is a working-woman from a bleak industrial town of the north called

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[137] *AB*, p. 53.

[138] For example, Eliot writes in her letter that "you are a bright spot in my memory, like Raphael's Saint Catherine." *Letters,* Vol I, p. 188 ; In *Romola*, a painter, Piero di Cosimo, describes Romola as being" fit to be model for a wise Saint Catherine of Egypt." *R*, p. 421; Contrary to the positive connotation of the image, however, Witemeyer argues that the opinion of Eliot on the image is ambivalent, as in *Middlemarch*, Dorothea is described with the reference of the image in the following way: "to sit like a model for St. Catherine looking rapturously at Celia's baby would not do from many hours of the day" *M*, p. 579. See the discussion on St. Catherine by Witemeyer, *George Eliot and the Visual Arts*, p. 88.

[139] Stump, *Movement and Vision in George Eliot's Novels,* p. 13.

Snowfield. Yet like Raphael's *St. Catherine*, her hands are significantly emphasised in a unique way. When Adam's mother Lisbeth is mourning her dead husband, Dinah visits to console her. Upon hearing Dinah's voice, Lisbeth becomes scared, feeling that it was her sister's spirit instead:

> Slowly Lisbeth drew down her apron, and timidly she opened her dim dark eyes, and it was quite unknown to her. Her wonder increased: perhaps it was an angel. But in the same instant Dinah had laid her hand on Lisbeth's again, and the old woman looked down at it. It was a much smaller hand than her own, but it was not white and delicate, for Dinah had never worn a glove in her life and her hand bore the traces of labour from her childhood upwards. Lisbeth looked earnestly at the hand for a moment, and then, fixing her eyes again on Dinah's face, said, with something or restored courage, but in a tone of surprise- 'Why, ye're a workin' woman!' [140]

Lisbeth fantasises that Dinah is a spirit or an angel, but recognises her as a working woman in the end. For Lisbeth, the visual information of the coarse hands, disassociates Dinah from the spiritual realm. Her exclamation "'Why, ye're a workin' woman!'" indicates her assumption that the hands of saints or angels must have been as white and soft as those in Biblical paintings, and reveals how the coarse hands do not correspond with Dinah's pale face. The description of Dinah's rough hands additionally reminds us of the impact of the hands in John Everett Millais's painting, *Christ in the House of His Parents* (1849-50). This painting was criticised because the artist depicts the holy family as figures with rough physiques, drawing attention to the typical idealisation of the depiction of saints in the visual arts.[141] Eliot's description of the coarse hands of Dinah plays an essential part in urging her readers to see sacredness in common people.

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[140] *AB*, p. 98.
[141] Andres, *The Pre-Raphaelite Art of the Victorian Novel*, p. 7.

Fig. 6

Raphael, *Saint Catherine of* Alexandria (1507), oil on wood, National Gallery, London.

For Eliot, such a difference between idealised and realistic rendering is reiterated in her admiration for the peasant figures in the Dutch paintings in chapter 17 of the novel.[142] What she is opposed to is the forced rules employed when depicting people in imagery designed for admiration in paintings. Female figures in nineteenth century visual art were often idealised in the form of the Madonna. Eliot ignores this "aesthetic rule" for the delineation of female beauty and admires the real physiques of common people as in the work-worn hands of Dinah or the old women scraping carrots.

In creating the characters of "Soul's Beauty," Eliot endows Dinah with sacred words and speech. As we have discussed, Eliot emphasises Hetty's visual impact by repeatedly describing her appearance. Indeed, Hetty does not often express herself by her words in the novel until the scene of her confession in prison. Her curved arm, white neck, rose pink cheek, thus her physique, becomes her non-verbal language to present herself. Hetty manipulates these visual images. In contrast, Dinah manipulates her words. Indeed, her appearance is described as "a lovely corpse" or "ghost," as if not existing physically.[143] Instead, her spiritual words reinforce her presence. Eliot deploys Dinah's long and passionate preaching as early as Chapter 2, and a traveler who came across the scene of her preaching gives the following impression on her talk:

> The simple things she said seemed like novelties, as a melody strikes us with a new feeling when we hear is sung by the pure voice of a boyish chorister; the quiet

[142] "Paint us an angel, if you can, with a floating violet robe, and a face paled by the celestial light; paint us yet oftener a Madonna, turning her mild face upward to welcome the divine glory; but do not impose on us any aesthetic rules which shall banish from the region of Art those old women scraping carrots with their work-worn hands, those heavy clowns taking holiday in a dingy pot-house, those rounded backs and stupid weather-beaten faces that have bent over the spade and done the rough work of the world..." *AB*, p. 154.
[143] *AB*, p. 134.

> depth of conviction with which she spoke seemed in itself an evidence for the truth of her message.[144]

Her preaching is transcended into music, and is striking to the listeners, generating a new feeling. This spiritual force of her words makes her conviction truth. The manner of Dinah's speech resembles medieval painting in that she can directly represent and express her own faith and spiritual feeling through the medium of words: Like medieval sacred paintings themselves become spirituality, her voice and speech becomes a spiritual entity.

In her preaching, furthermore, Dinah brings awe to those who listening by speaking as if a spiritual entity appears next to them (Chapter 2). For example, Dinah makes one of the listeners, Wiry Ben, feel as if "what she said would haunt him somehow. Yet he couldn't help liking to look at her and listen to her." [145] She embodies the word of Bible as she can tell what chapter she opens without seeing the title and number when she touches the book in darkness (Chapter 15). Even if the presence of Dinah is gone in the middle of the novel, she appears without bodily presence. When Hetty travels to search for Donnithorne in vain, she happens to come across a name, "Dinah Morris, Snowfield" written by Dinah on one of her belongings, as a result of which Hetty starts remembering her words (Chapter 37). Here Dinah appears in a text. In fact, Eliot explores the interchange between visual and verbal representations in her novels. On this account, scholars observed that Eliot adheres to Lessing's writing that argues for the superiority of verbal art over static visual arts. Indeed, Will Ladislaw's opinion in *Middlemarch* that "Language is a finer medium";

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[144] Ibid., p. 22.
[145] Ibid., p. 23.

"Language gives a fuller image" [146] may be a direct echo of the novelist's opinion. Yet as Rebecca Rainof suggests, it is unlikely that Eliot held a one-sided view such as the verbal is superior to the visual.[147] Rather, Eliot values both and examines the way in which they unite. In *Adam Bede*, she overtly links this verbal force with the creation of "Soul's Beauty," in contrast to Hetty, described with full visual rendering. The manifold aspects of beauty in image and text thus implicitly connect the pair of Hetty and Dinah.

Interweaving of the Body's Beauty and the Soul's Beauty

After having explored the ways in which Rossetti and Eliot expounded the representation of "Body's Beauty" and "Soul's Beauty," the following section examines the ways in which Rossetti and Eliot blur the boundary of the Victorian dichotomy of "Body's Beauty" and "Soul's Beauty" by interweaving their elements.

Around the same time as Rossetti was painting *Lady Lilith*, he started one of his rare nude paintings, *Venus Verticordia* (1864-8). However, this first nude painting created in oil did not receive positive evaluations. [Fig. 7] George Rae[126] declined to buy Rossetti's Venus saying that "the oil painting struck me as just a trifle too voluptuous."[148] Rae asked Rossetti if the nude figure could be adorned with a drape, but the artist refused.[149] Rossetti persisted in drawing Venus as a naked figure and the

[146] *M*, p. 222.
[147] Rebecca Rainof, 'George Eliot's Screaming Statue, Laocoon, the Pre-Raphaelites' in *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, Vol.54, No. 4 (Autumn 2014, pp. 875-899), pp. 881-2.
[148] Cited in Alison Smith, ed. *The Exposed: The Victorian Nude* (London: Tate publishing, 2001), p. 137.
[149] Smith, *The Exposed*, p. 137.

painting was eventually purchased by John Mitchell, a Bradford businessman. The most well-known version depicts the head of Wilding. Yet, just as with *Lady Lilith*, there are two versions of *Venus Verticordia*: One with the head of an unidentified Cornforth-like woman and one with that of Wilding, and moreover, the Venus's figure shares not only Cornforth's but multiple types of female physiques. The initial model was believed to be a cook whom Rossetti spotted on the street. Unfortunately, her identity is unknown, but William Allingham and William Michael Rossetti describe her respectively as "a very large young woman, almost a giantess" and "a handsome and striking woman, not very much less than six feet high."[150] This description hints that Rossetti appears to have favoured a "giant" female physique, resembling that of Cornforth. Cornforth is also believed to have modelled for another version of this painting in watercolour.[151] This fusion of "Soul's Beauty" and "Body's Beauty" amounted to Rossetti's creation of a new aesthetic representation.

During the Victorian period, new attempts were made towards the painting of the nude. Alison Smith suggests that "the fascination of the Victorian nude as opposed to other traditions is the constant renegotiation of the boundaries separating real from ideal, natural from artificial, pure from impure, public from private."[152] Victorian avant-garde artists sought to transgress the traditional nineteenth-century dichotomies in the delineation of explicit female flesh. Rossetti's nude Venus that

[150] Cited in Marsh, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Painter and Poet*, p. 277.
[151] Ibid., p. 287. Marsh notes that during the period when Rossetti was engaged in *Venus Verticordia*, he visited Paris accompanied by Cornforth. Rossetti brought and completed the small crayon version of *Venus Verticordia* while socializing with French artists in Paris, where nude paintings were less controversial than they were in Britain.
[152] Smith, *The Victorian Nude*, p. 8.

blends spirituality and physicality to lift his figure into a more aesthetic realm eminently demonstrates his challenge of traditional iconography.

Indeed, Rossetti's *Venus Verticordia* was very provocative at the time. A dart held in Venus's hand points to her bare breast as if seductively directing our view to it. The fleshly and aesthetic essence of the naked figure is emphasised through the sensuous colour and strong, big brush strokes. The use of colour in nude paintings was controversial in the Victorian art world. White was an appropriate colour since it was associated with purity and impassivity,[153] the nude painting of Rossetti on the other hand emphasises colour. He uses sensuous reds especially in the depiction of the roses, honeysuckle, apple, and in the lips, nipples and hair of his Venus. The aesthetic choice of colour provocatively corresponds to her sensuous naked flesh.

Rossetti's dismissal of the traditional rendering of the classical divine figure is also indicated in his elusive use of symbolism. For example, the figure of Venus holding an apple can symbolise forthcoming disaster. In Greek mythology at Paris's judgment, Paris chooses Venus as the most beautiful woman and gives her the apple as prize, on the condition that she will offer him a beautiful woman, Helen, as his wife. This incident eventually causes the Trojan War. On the other hand, in Biblical iconography, the apple represents the forbidden fruit offered to Eve that she offers to Adam. An image of a woman with an apple then symbolises her potential power to destroy men's lives. The apple in Rossetti's *Venus*, therefore, connotes symbolism from both Greek mythology and Christianity. What strengthens the association of the

[153] Ibid., p. 121.

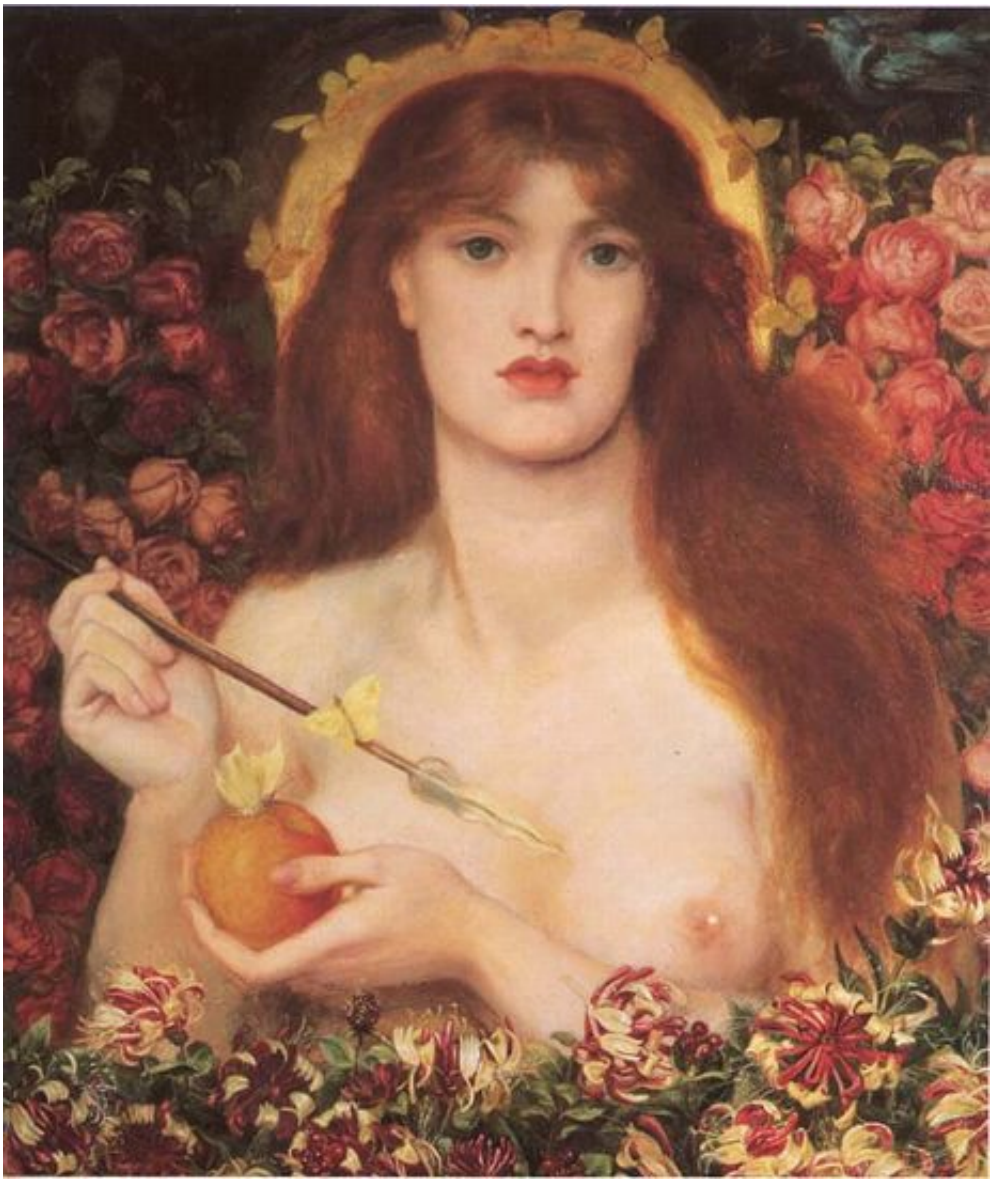

Fig.7

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Venus Verticordia* (1864-8), oil, Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth.

apple with its Christian connotation, however, is the depiction of a Halo over the head of Venus. Rossetti actively blends Christian iconography with the antique representation and he justifies his idea by stating that "I believe the Greeks used to do it."[154] While the halo signifies a saint, it is the abundant flowing red hair of Venus beneath the halo that stands out. As is well-known, Pre-Raphaelite artists were drawn to red-haired women because their hair colour connoted dormant and dangerous sexual drives. Thus, the combination of red hair and a halo combines the secular and divine, traditionally associated with the figure of Mary Magdalene in Western art. As Marsh notes, Mary Magdalene represents a rare figure "in which artists could combine the sacred and the profane."[155] Thus in his Venus depicted with both red hair and a halo, Rossetti allows the figure to absorb all of the elements of the sacred and the profane, and ignores the division between the essence of Christianity and Greek iconography. Regardless of his deliberate use of this symbolism, the interweaving of the Christian and classical features makes the figure of Venus undefinable.

The interweaving of physicality and spirituality is emphasised by Rossetti's treatment of the mysterious and erotic honeysuckle in the foreground. The honeysuckle, at the front of the canvas, is realistically depicted in the manner of early Pre-Raphaelitism. The contrast between the overtly eroticised and aesthetically coloured Venus and the meticulously transcribed honeysuckle in a realist style produces an uncanny visual effect.[156] This exact manner of painting indicates the traditional spirit of "truth to nature," and links with the spiritual. Yet, when we observe the honeysuckle in Rossetti's Venus, we cannot help but be distracted by the naked

[154] Cited in Marsh, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Painter and Poet*, p. 279.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Lindsay Smith, *Pre-Raphaelitism: Poetry and Painting*, p. 22.

body of Venus, and especially her breasts. The honeysuckle makes the representation of Venus more visible and concrete, and *vice versa,* the spiritual presence of Venus provides the physical flowers with metaphorical meaning.

Walter Pater's essay on Rossetti addresses the artist's experiments with physicality and spirituality. Pater, comparing the Italian poet Dante with Rossetti, maintains:

> And yet, again as with Dante, to speak of his ideal type of beauty as material, is partly misleading. Spirit and matter, indeed, have been for the most part opposed, with a false contrast or antagonism, by schoolmen, whose artificial creation those abstractions really are. In our actual concrete experience, the two trains of phenomena which the words matter and spirit do but roughly distinguish, play inextricably into each other. To him, in the vehement and impassioned heat of his conceptions, the material and the spiritual are fused and blent[sic]: if the spiritual attains the definite visibility of a crystal, what is material loses its earthiness and impurity. And here again, by force of instinct, Rossetti is one with him.[157]

With regard to the interweaving of the material and spiritual, Pater believes that the way in which Rossetti fuses the two sublimates the elements of each object: While spirituality is endowed with visibility, materiality is separated from its earthliness. The relationship between the honeysuckle with its definite visibility and the figure of Venus as a spiritual element reinforces the melange.

Rossetti also animates this figure with the following sonnet:

> She hath the apple in her hand for thee,
> Yet almost in her heart would hold it back;
> She muses, with her eyes upon the track
> Of that which in thy spirit they can see.
> Haply, 'Behold, he is at peace,' saith she;
> 'Alas! the apple for his lips, - the dart

[157] *Appreciations*, pp. 220-221.

> That follows its brief sweetness to his heart, -
> The wandering of his feet perpetually.'[158]

Unlike the sonnet 'Body's Beauty', in which a third person perspective observes Lilith, the narrator here takes on Venus's perspective in the first stanza. Lucien L. Agosta notes that the sonnet works most significantly in describing Venus's mind and consciousness as exhibited in the painting and discloses Venus's humanistic point of indecision.[159] Rossetti here undermines the Victorian rules of painting the nude figure with a psychological observation: He gives a static and material body an immaterial presence of psychology by the medium of the verbal.[160] The words "she muses", in the above, imply she is a static visual inspiration for artists as a "muse", yet she herself muses and simultaneously makes us muse; thus the sonnet emphasises the invisible force of the dynamism of psychology.

Ruskin criticised the fleshly rendered *Venus Verticordia*, because he was confused by the way in which Rossetti had blended spiritual and material elements.

> I purposely used the word "wonderfully" printed about those flowers. They were wonderful to me in their realism; awful I can use no other word—in their, coarseness; showing enormous power; showing certain conditions of non-sentiment which underlie all you are doing—now – and which make your work, compared to what it used to be—what Fanny's face is to Lizzie's.[161]

What is interesting in his remark is that Ruskin uses a comparison between two of Rossetti's models, Cornforth and Siddall. Ruskin clearly suggests his personal preference for Siddall. He implies that the image of Cornforth is associated with

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[158] *The Works*, p. 210.
[159] Lucien L Agosta, 'Animate Images: The Later Poem-Paintings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti' in *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Spring, 1981, pp. 78-101), p. 93.
[160] Smith, *Pre-Raphaelitism*, p. 71.
[161] Cited in Marsh, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Painter and Poet*, p. 280.

sensuality and coarseness, and therefore immorality, whereas Siddall is associated with that which is wonderful, moral, and divine. His praise for Rossetti's rendering of the flowers in the style of realism does therefore not indicate his admiration, but rather he contends that such realist rendering significantly illuminates the sensuous coarse naked body of the figure of Venus.

Interweaving of Body's Beauty and Soul's Beauty in *Adam Bede*

The representations of "Body's Beauty" and "Soul's Beauty" in Eliot's novels exchange their unexplored emotional, spiritual and earthy desires by interacting directly or indirectly with each other. Eliot endows the divine character Dinah with an earthly element at the end of the novel. At the same time, the novelist lets Hetty have her voice and spiritual experiences.

In *Adam Bede*, whereas Dinah hardly recognises her physical and feminine beauty by herself, Hetty indicates Dinah's potential female sexuality. In chapter 20, when Adam meets Hetty at the Hall Farm of the Poysers, he describes Dinah in black plain clothes by saying "' 'it seems to me as a woman's face doesna want flowers; it's almost like a flower itself'."[162] Hetty, after hearing the comments of Adam, deliberately appears in Dinah's costume at dinner time to draw Adam's attention. The narrator states that "the thought of Dinah's pale grave face and mild grey eyes, which

[162] *AB*, p. 192.

the sight of the gown and cap brought with it, made it a laughable surprise enough to see them replaced by Hetty's round rosy cheeks and coquettish dark eyes."[163] The image draws a comparison between Dinah's black dress, which camouflages her physical attraction, and Hetty's overtly sexualised physical attributes with her round rosy cheeks and coquettish dark eyes. However, Hetty placed in the Methodist costume does not transform into Dinah. Instead, the switch implies the undiscovered physical beauty and femininity in Dinah, which Hetty unconsciously demonstrates.

In fact, the image of Hetty wearing Dinah's costume is implicitly indicated again: In the last part of the novel, Dinah exhibits her physical attractiveness, which is perceived by Adam. Like Hetty, her realisation of her sexual desire is ignited by the male gaze. Eliot depicts Dinah's self-consciousness through the point of view of Adam as he observes Dinah and discovers that he sees her differently than before: In giving her his hand, Adam notices Dinah's deep rose colour and finds her "as if she were only sister to Dinah".[164] The mere physical touch of Adam, which Dinah used to experience with his brother Seth, makes a difference in her for the first time. She exhibits the rose-coloured cheeks, the symbol of Hetty's charm and her flesh. Dinah, who is described as "a lovely corpse"[165] in the early part of the novel, obtains sensuous flesh and what makes her human is her feeling of agitation. While her emotion used to be completely devoted to her religious mission, and male gazes made her feel nothing previously, this experience of agitation as she experiences earthly desire, is a juncture in her life, which shifts her from a prioritisation of the will of God to a focus on her own will and spontaneous emotion.

[163] Ibid., p. 196.
[164] Ibid., p. 417.
[165] Ibid., p. 134.

As the character representing "Soul's Beauty," Dinah, acknowledges her earthly aspects, Hetty acknowledges the divinity in human existence. Hetty seeks the divine presence of the spiritual realm. During her search for Donnithorne who seduced and abandoned her, she is put into a prison on the charge of child murder. On learning of this event, Dinah visits Hetty at the prison to give her consolation. In this reunion, Hetty starts confessing to Dinah about the baby she abandoned and her sense of fear and guilt. In the scene of her confession at the prison, Hetty speaks to Dinah, as opposed to the previous relation in which Dinah speaks to Hetty. Although Dinah encourages Hetty to feel and contact God, Hetty confesses that " 'I can't feel anything like you.'"[166] There is no explanation as to whether Hetty understands the presence of God through the consolation of Dinah. What Hetty can see is only the presence of Dinah. Indeed, Dinah becomes a spiritual representation for Hetty.

Eliot aims to emphasises the consolation and divine power Hetty feels from the bodily presence of Dinah. That is the divinity of humanity. When Dinah visits her in prison, Hetty does not recognises her in the darkness at first, and yet without knowing who it is, Hetty seeks physical contact: "Hetty, without any distinct thought of it, hung on this [Dinah] something that was come to clasp her now, while she was sinking helpless in a dark gulf."[167] Then Dinah informs Hetty that it is her who is present. While Hetty finds consolation in Dinah by talking and listening to her, Dinah herself "felt the Divine presence more and more,– nay, as if she herself were a part of it."[168] Dinah thus becomes the physical and visible embodiment of the divine presence for Hetty who is

[166] *AB*, p. 387.
[167] Ibid., p. 385.
[168] Ibid.

incapable of feeling what Dinah feels. Instead of asking for forgiveness from God, therefore, Hetty confesses and asks Dinah for *her* forgiveness.

What is especially interesting in this scene is the way in which Eliot depicts this interaction of the two female characters: The scene highlights the physical interweaving of the two rather than the interaction itself:

> The light got fainter as they [Hetty and Dinah]stood, and when at last they sat down on the straw pallet together, their faces had become indistinct.[169]

> She[Hetty] was clinging close to Dinah; her cheek was against Dinah's. It seemed as if her last faint strength and hope lay in that contact; and the pitying love that shone out from Dinah's face looked like a visible pledge of the Invisible Mercy...[170]

Hetty's body clings to Dinah's and is highlighting not only their physical contact but also Hetty's desperate desire to make contact with the divine presence of Dinah. This portrayal of two female figures united bears a resemblance to the characters Lizzie and Laura in Christina Rossetti 'Goblin Market' (1862), in which Lizzie, representing morality, kisses Laura, who is poisoned by the fruits of the Goblin and recovers morally as well as physically through that physical contact with her sister. In *Adam Bede*, what begins as a physical communication becomes a spiritual communication for Hetty. Instead of using a metaphorical rendering of Hetty's confession, Eliot delineates this scene physically by indicating the interaction and emotional interconnection of the "Body's Beauty" and the "Soul's Beauty" as a sacred communication epitomised in the communication between common people.

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[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid., p. 395.

Interweaving: 'The Blessed Damozel' and *Daniel Deronda*

Rossetti's interweaving of physical desire with a spiritualised body is embodied through a female figure, and it becomes increasingly coupled with his exploration of the pairing of painting and poetry. He began to consider the collision of spirituality and physicality even before the establishment of the Pre-Raphaelites in 1848. The poem, 'The Blessed Damozel,' one of his earliest works composed in 1846-7 and rewritten in 1880, becomes the basis of his exploration of "Body's Beauty" and "Soul's Beauty." The portrayal of the dead Damozel in heaven wishing to reunite with her lover on earth in this poem has often been associated with the artist's dead wife, Elizabeth Siddall. However, the poem was written before he met her. As D. M. R. Bentley points out, the poem's mysteriously increased personal and biographical elements reflected his experience of desire for his dead wife.[171] In painting of *The Blessed Damozel* in 1870, Rossetti did not use Siddall's portrait. Instead, he painted an intriguing composite: he used the face of Wilding and the image of his new lover of the time, Jane Morris, on the background. This painting assembles Rossetti's women including the spiritual presence of Siddall whose body is deceased and inaccessible for Rossetti, the physical presence of Jane Morris whose soul is inaccessible for him, and the aesthetic and material presence of Wilding. In this last section of this chapter, I want to focus on this complex figure of the Damozel represented in the image and text, and compare to Eliot's character, Gwendolen Harleth in *Daniel Deronda*.

[171] D. M. R. Bentley, '"The Blessed Damozel": A Young Man's Fantasy' in *Victorian Poetry*, Vol. 20, No. 3/4 (Autumn - Winter, 1982, pp. 31-43), p. 32.

While Walter Pater describes Rossetti's poem 'The Blessed Damozel' as the peculiar blending of "definiteness" and the poetic effect of vision,[172] Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* shows a similar interweaving of two different aspects. One is the delineation of the psychological conflict of earthly Gwendolen as an English plot and the other is that of the spiritual and dreamy experience of Daniel Deronda with Mordecai as a Jewish plot.[173] If the two parts can be divided into the realm of the earthly, Gwendolen, and the spiritual, Deronda, I observe that Eliot demonstrates the intensified conflict of the two opposing poles of materialistic and spiritual desire. It is especially true in the portrayal of Gwendolen, and Eliot simultaneously manipulates the relationship between visual and verbal forces in the figures of Gwendolen and Deronda.

In 'The Blessed Damozel', Rossetti reverses our perception of spirituality in the realm of non-physicality. Armstrong points out that "[t]he poem is asking in what way we perceive the mystical body through the physical body and how we invest the material with significance."[174] Thus Rossetti invests earthly desire with such a non-physical spirit as The Damozel. In fact, Eliot's creation of Gwendolen echoes Rossetti's twist of *The Blessed Damozel*. Gwendolen could be a complex version of Hetty: She represents a material presence with earthly desire and narcissism, but one gradually wishing to understand the force of spirituality through her interaction with Deronda in order to atone for her sense of sin. This earthly presence with materialistic desire and

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[172] *Appreciations*, p. 207.
[173] See scholars' discussion such as: Witemeyer, Hugh, 'English and Italian portraiture in Daniel Deronda' in *Nineteen-Century Fiction*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (March, 1976), pp. 447-497; Cynthia Chase 'The Decomposition of the Elephants: Double-Reading Daniel Deronda,' *PMLA*, Vol. 93, No. 2 (Mar., 1978), pp. 215-227.
[174] Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics, and Politics*, p. 247.

yet a wish to learn an uncharted moralistic and spiritual influence is a reverse of Rossetti's Damozel: A spiritual presence with physical desire and a longing for the body of her lover on earth. The suffering of the pair of Gwendolen and the Damozel thus presents the intensified relationship between spirituality and physicality.

The representations of The Damozel and Gwendolen have in common the striking visual outlines. The first stanza of the 'The Blessed Damozel' visibly defines a physical realm in which The Damozel exists. In a change from his normal order of working, Rossetti composed the poem first and then painted the image later.[175] Nonetheless, the pattern of 'The Blessed Damozel, draws an analogy with other poems attributed to his paintings in that Rossetti provides visual information in his poetical language as attributed to a painting; this is demonstrated at the beginning of the poem:

> The blessed damozel leaned out
> From the gold bar of Heaven;
> Her grave eyes were deeper than the depth
> Of water stilled at even; She had three lilies in her hand,
> And the stars in her hair were seven. [176]

"The gold bar of heaven" defines the borderline between the spiritual realm of heaven and the earthy realm; yet the bar also symbolises the physicality of both heaven and the dead woman. In addition to the presences of the golden bar, the stars and lilies that decorate The Damozel signify her physical body. Walter Pater observes that, for Rossetti, "the first condition of the poetic way of seeing and presenting things is particularisation."[177] These particular imageries strikingly contrast with the void of her

[175] Smith, *Pre-Raphaelitism: Poetry and Painting*, p. 65.
[176] *The Works*, p. 3.
[177] *Appreciations*, p. 216.

actual body, yet the detailed descriptions of the materials reinforce a point that the body of The Damozel seems as visible as the visual symbols.

Eliot's Gwendolen, in the same way, is invested with particular images and symbols: The narrator compares her to a "tall newly-opened lily":[178] She is awarded the prize of a special golden "star" to be worn on the bosom after the first session of an archery competition; she is invested with diamonds gifted by Grandcourt, and like the dominant colours in the painting of *The Blessed Damozel* [Fig 8], she is clothed with green dresses. However, in this materialization of Gwendolen, those distinctive images represent the void of her actual life. For example, the award of the star in the archery competition, for Gwendolen, does not necessarily highlight her superior skill at archery but reinforces her sense of superiority as a central-character. Before being introduced to the young and wealthy bachelor, Henleigh Mallinger Grandcourt, at the archery meeting, Gwendolen notices him, yet she deliberately stays away from him while keeping herself busily engaged with the archery game. Gwendolen acts as if she is merely an aesthetic object to be worshiped by him: "She was the central object of that pretty picture, and every one present must gaze at her. That was enough: she was determined to see nobody in particular."[179] While she is willing to become a passive object, in fact, she believes that she manipulates men by commanding their attention and drawing it to her physical presence. Furthermore, Gwendolen herself wishes to be a static representation in a painting, saying that "I will be Saint Cecilia: some one shall paint me as Saint Cecilia."[180] Like Hetty in *Adam Bede*, Gwendolen also enjoys the fact that she dominates male gazes. Like the symbolic imageries with which Rossetti

[178] *DD*, p. 145.
[179] Ibid., p. 106.
[180] Ibid., p. 26.

decorates The Damozel draw our attention to her physical presence, Gwendolen's presence is emphasised by those aesthetic visual symbols and analogies.

Like the representation of "Body's Beauty" in Hetty, Gwendolen's self-confidence is generated through the act of viewing her own reflection in the mirror. Soon after learning the news of the failure of her family's business, Gwendolen displays little emotional turbulence: She hardly expresses her anxiety, but instead sustains her confidence in continuing an unchanged, comfortable life, by viewing her reflection in the glass:

> … she sat gazing at her image in the growing light, her face gathered a complacency gradual as the cheerfulness of the morning. Her beauty lips curled into a more and more decided smile, till at last she took off her hat, leaned forward and kissed the cold glass which had looked so warm. [181]

Her narcissism here becomes most explicit in her act of kissing her own image in the glass: The reflection, for Gwendolen, seems warm like her living body. To her, there is no difference between the original and its representation. In other words, Gwendolen is not cognizant of, or is uncaring about, the difference between reality and representations thereof. Her theatrical attitude also suggests this aspect of her nature, as she tends to see reality as a drama on stage.[182] So, Gwendolen sees the news of her family's bankruptcy literally as a drama, and the view of the other self in the glass is indistinguishable with her real self: The reflection of her soulless body on the mirror

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[181] Ibid., p. 18.

[182] Alison Byerly explored the theatrical elements in Eliot's novels and points out that Gwendolen "feels a natural affinity for acting; she enjoys putting together dramatic costumes for herself, and organises a series of charades and tableaux in order to exhibit her imagined talent." See, *Realism, Representation, and the Arts in Nineteenth Century, Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), p. 127.

get the illusion of corporeality. That Gwendolen's body in the mirror reflection gains the warmth of life echoes the following stanza in Rossetti's Damozel:

> And still she bowed herself and stooped
> Out of the circling charm;
> Until her bosom must have made
> The bar she leaned on warm,
> And the lilies lay as if asleep
> Along her bended arm.[183]

The warmth she transfers to the bar corresponds to the earthly desire of the bodiless dead woman who wishes for a reunion with her lover. The narrator notes that her bosom "must have made" the bar warm, which implies uncertainty as to whether the bar was actually warmed by her presence or it was just fantasy.

Rossetti highlights the mixture of the mythical body with the ethereal and material elements in the figure of The Damozel. She suffers from the absence of her lover's earthly presence. On the other hand, Eliot's Gwendolen highlights the mixture of an earthly body and materialistic thought, yet she comes to suffer from the absence of her spiritual and moral guidance. And as Gwendolen's suffering increases, the implication of material presence increases. Diamonds, jewels, or gems are this case in point. Eliot's treatment of the diamonds in the novel echoes Rossetti's investment of The Damozel's psychology into her material presence. Eliot consciously uses the metaphor of diamonds and jewelry being exchanged among people. Like the multi-faceted appearance of diamonds, the value of the materials for Gwendolen changes and does so in correspondence to her life. For example, the diamonds are sent from Grandcourt's mother to Grandcourt, to Lydia Glasher, his mistress, and finally to his

[183] *The Works*, p. 4.

new wife Gwendolen, increasing the metaphysical meaning. The diamonds in the plot of Gwendolen are sent to her from her husband along with Lydia's poisonous letter. Gwendolen immediately burns the letter yet its words become incorporated in the diamonds. The narrator then states that "Truly here were poisoned gems, and the poison had entered into this poor young creature."[184] For Gwendolen, these material possessions become a symbol of her horror, being concomitant with the inexplicable force of the cursed words from Lydia's letter that question "Shall you like to stand before your husband with these diamonds on you, and these words of mine in his thoughts and yours?"[185] And in spite of Gwendolen's horror, Grandcourt forces her to wear these diamonds, which, for her, becomes a psychological torture. Eliot illustrates Gwendolen's invisible psychological drama through the diamonds. Here is a Rossettian reversal that the non-physical presence, that is the curse of Lydia, obtains a material form.

After Gwendolen possesses the diamonds, she begins to crave moral guidance, realising that her physical presence, which she used to believe powerful, is hopeless. Although Eliot deliberately highlights the materialistic and femme fatal aspects in Gwendolen at the outset of the novel, the narrator later on reveals the fact that "She had a root of conscience in her, and the process of purgatory had begun for her on the green earth."[186] Gwendolen suffers as she is betwixt and between the desire of being materialist and an increasing desire for moralistic and spiritual improvement. Thus, Gwendolen starts yearning for a spiritual influence from Deronda. In this regard, Deronda can be viewed as a male counterpart of the "Soul's Beauty" in the novel as

[184] *DD*, p. 359.
[185] Ibid., p. 357.
[186] Ibid., p, 669.

Eliot neutralises his gender. Jennifer Uglow observes that "Eliot makes her 'good' feminine character a man—Daniel Deronda himself. His feminine receptivity is contrasted to the 'bad' feminine character of Gwendolen, wrapped by her education and by the ideology of women which it enshrines."[187] Thus, the novel contains another significant pairing of Gwendolen and Deronda, and their interaction is analogous to that of Dinah and Hetty in *Adam Bede*. The ambiguous relationship between Gwendolen and Deronda continues throughout the novel. Gwendolen feels strongly in need of his presence for her own moral salvation, as her sense of guilt toward Lydia increases; for her, he reveals a new consciousness: "his influence had entered into the current of that self-suspicion and self-blame which awakens a new consciousness."[188]

It is after the box of the cursed diamonds is opened that Gwendolen becomes aware of non-physical influence: That is the power of words. Like Hetty, Gwendolen expresses her aesthetic presence and commands others' attention through her visual appearance, yet she has no voice to express her emotions. Similarly, in the case of the language of Rossetti's poem, The Damozel does not have a strong voice; in fact, it is feeble. As Armstrong suggests, the reader hears The Damozel's voice expressed in signs and analogy including "the voice of stars, the song of birds, the sound of the bell." [189] Gwendolen's voice, on the other hand, metaphorically loses its aesthetic value as her music teacher Herr Klesmer shuns her potential to be a singer and actress. Moreover, in addition to her lost confidence in her singing ability, the secret letter from Lydia oppresses her, preventing her from speaking out.

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[187] Cited in Kate Flint, 'George Eliot and Gender' in George Levine, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to George Eliot* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, pp. 159-180), p. 176.
[188] *DD*, p. 430.
[189] Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics, and Politics*, p. 247.

Yet as the interaction with Deronda increases, so too does Gwendolen's desire to speak. She wishes that " '….he could know everything about me without telling him.'"[190] After Gwendolen's momentary thought that Grandcourt should die has come to pass in reality, she becomes more self-conscious of her sin and confesses it all to Deronda, asking for his advice. She tries to be what Deronda wants her to be while believing him to be the embodiment of morality because his words have a peculiar impact on her:

> The words were like the touch of a miraculous hand to Gwendolen. Mingled emotions streamed through her frame with a strength that seemed the beginning of a new existence, having some new power or other which stirred in her vaguely. So pregnant is the divine hope of moral recovery with the energy that fulfils it. So potent in us is the infused action of another soul, before which we bow in complete love. But the new existence seemed inseparable from Deronda: the hope seemed to make his presence permanent.[191]

Gwendolen appreciated neither physical nor emotional communication with Grandcourt while continuing an artificial marital life. On the other hand, the non-physical words of Deronda for Gwendolen, generate a sense of valuable human interaction, that is "the touch of a miraculous hand," and moreover, energise not only her frame but also her hope for moral recovery. As Dinah becomes a mixture of the physical and spiritual entity for Hetty, so does Deronda with his words: for Gwendolen he incorporates both visible, physical and spiritual influences. After the confession of her sinful thought, she learns to express herself. The novel ends with her letter to Deronda and her writing that "I have remembered your words—that I may live to be one of the best women, who make others glad that they were born."[192] And the arrival

[190] *DD*, p 430.
[191] Ibid., p. 769.
[192] Ibid, p. 810.

of her letter is described thus, “something more precious than gold and gems came to Deronda.” [193] Without the physical presence of Gwendolen, the novel ends with her words. Her language in the letter gains the profound value that the gems could not. Thus in spite of her unfortunate life, Gwendolen embodies the spiritual words of Deronda and decides to continue to live with them. The ending of the novel emphasises that her presence is transcended into the voice of her soul: A non-physical yet solid presence with her determination to improve her life in human society. Here Eliot depicts the interweaving of Gwendolen’s earthly body and newly awakened soul, and the interweaving forces of her visual impact and words.

In the renewed version of *The House of Life* in 1880, Rossetti added the following comments before the sonnets: “A Sonnet is a coin: its face reveals/The soul, --its converse, to what Power ’tis due.”[194] This mechanism of the double sidedness of a coin is sought by Rossetti, not only by the weaving of arts between poetry and paintings, but also that of the “Soul’s Beauty” and the “Body’s Beauty” or the element of spirituality and physicality. As I have demonstrated, this conception is also present in the work of Eliot. Her fictional characters contain the same double sidedness: They unfold, not only in a number of implications to visual images, but each character is also linked to its opposing representation. The relationship of the two-sidedness of a coin is especially reflected in those of Eliot’s characters that became figures of the “Body’s Beauty” and the “Soul’s Beauty” as exemplified by the pair of Hetty and Dinah, and Gwendolen and Deronda. Finally, Rossetti’s painting and Eliot’s fiction also reflect the two sides of a coin; in spite of our different perceptions of their works – the former is

[193] Ibid.
[194] *The Works*, p. 74.

seen as sensuous, while the latter didactic— they share views about nineteenth century dicotomisation and share a common philosophy concerning the external and internal worlds that is based on the integration of secular and spiritual elements in art.

Fig. 8
Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Blessed Damozel* (1875-8), oil, Fogg Museum of Art, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Chapter II

Studies on the Threads of Humanity by George Eliot and Walter Pater

In his early writing 'Diaphaneitè' composed in 1864, a year after the publication of George Eliot's *Romola*, Walter Pater observes the aspiration for "simplicity" with significant reference to the novel, especially to her non-fictional character, a Dominican priest, Girolamo Savonarola. Pater exemplifies an ideal human spirit, alluding to this character in the following way.

> It is the spirit that sees external circumstances as they are, its own power and tendencies as they are, and realises the given conditions of its life, not disquieted by the desire for change, or the preference of one part in life rather than another, or passion, or opinion. The character we mean to indicate achieves this perfect life by a happy gift of nature, without any struggle at all. Not the saint only, the artist also, and the speculative thinker, confused, jarred, disintegrated in the world, as sometimes they inevitably are, aspire for this simplicity to the last. The struggle of this aspiration with a lower practical aim in the mind of Savonarola has been subtly traced by the author of Romola. [195]

Pater notes the way in which Eliot portrays the figure of Savonarola who incorporates a complex entanglement of external and internal circumstances at a particular historical setting, namely fifteenth century Florence. In *Romola*, this ascetic priest

[195] *SHR*, pp. 136-7.

desires in vain to see the affinity between his fulfilment of the internal, that is early Christian spirituality, and the external, that is political power. In spite of Pater's short and abrupt reference to Eliot's character above, it still presents his profound understanding of the novel, especially into way in which Eliot charts a complex parallel between the struggles of a human mind in such a historical character as Savonarola and an individual, fictional heroine, Romola, who is obscured from history.[196] It can be said that Eliot's observations on Savonarola significantly influenced Pater's observations upon human minds in his later essays.[197] Pater introduced this figure in his other essays including 'Johan Joachim Winckelmann' and 'Sandra Botticelli', which were published later in his book entitled *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*. And in the chapter on Winckelmann, Pater suggests that both Winckelmann and Savonarola successfully "initiated a new organ for human spirit."[198] Like Eliot, Pater is concerned with the internal evolution of the human mind in relation to its historical circumstances, which concomitantly requires careful acts of seeing. In fact, the works of Eliot and Pater resemble one another in that both carefully examined links between internal and external circumstances of human lives, and both asserted that art can bring vital experiences that facilitate the understanding of individual lives and spirits.

In their writings, especially Eliot's novels after the 1860s and Pater's art criticism, a commitment is made to a mission to uncover the flux and varied formulations of humanity. Each achieves her or his commitment by focusing particularly on intricate

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[196] Carolyn Williams, *Transfigured World: Walter Pater's Aesthetic Historicism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1989), p. 181-182.
[197] David J. DeLaura discusses the influence of Eliot's novel on Pater's writing in his article, 'Romola and the Origin of the Paterian View of Life' in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (December, 1966), pp. 225-233. Also see an opposing view by Donald L. Hill, 'Pater's Debt to Romola' in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (March, 1968), pp.361-377.
[198] *SHR*, p. 92.

human sensibilities that develop and sometimes limit the perspective of their bearers. Both Eliot and Pater are modern in their ambitious attempts to articulate the mystery of human subjective sensibility, and demonstrate this in their own individual styles through ethics and aesthetics.

In her early essay 'The Natural History of German Life,' published from the *Westminster Review* in 1856, George Eliot asserts that: "Art is the nearest thing to life; it is a mode of amplifying experience and extending our contact with our fellow-men beyond the bounds of our personal lot."[199] Pater, correspondingly, writes in his conclusion to *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* [200] that art gives you "the highest quality to your moment" and that desires and passions for aesthetics quicken your sensibility with "multiplied consciousness."[201] Eliot regards art as a stimulus for the evolution of an ethical life, which in turn develops our communal and social lives; Pater regards art as a source of the evolution of one's susceptibility, which develops one's individuality and creates "a new organ" in ephemeral moments and results in the construction of "self-culture." Both admit that art is illusion, yet they view art as, in Pater's words, "accomplished forms of human life" and "receptacles of so many powers or forces"[202] that generate the real and authentic experience in individuals' interior worlds. Pater believes, thereby, that art history can chart the development of the human mind and life whereas Eliot believes that novels can perform the same function.

Within the accounts of their ultimate visions of the relationship between art and

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[199] *Essays*, p. 271.
[200] This thesis uses the edition of *Studies in History of the Renaissance*, ed. Matthew Beaumont (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010).
[201] *SHR*, p. 121.
[202] Ibid., p. 3.

life, however, Eliot and Pater do not entirely concur. The voice of a didactic message for her readers strongly resounds in Eliot's writing, whereas the encouragement of sensuous experiences and individualism with the slogan "art for art's sake" appears to be key to Pater's work. The position of Pater in the domain of nineteenth century art history has often been ambiguous. Although his work may link with works by Rossetti, Burne-Jones, William Morris, and Simeon Solomon, he seems to be outside of the art historical context of Pre-Raphaelitism: Rather, his subversive and sensuous writings tend to be regarded as the inception of aestheticism, homoerotic text and modernism. These contexts thus create a hypothesis that his writings are antithetical to George Eliot's realism.

This chapter, on the other hand, illuminates that Pater's writing extends the intellectual footprint of Pre-Raphaelitism; he pursues yet reconstructs the realist creed of seeing objects as they are in an original way. I will examine this aspect by juxtaposing his work with that of Eliot. Pater and Eliot are very much concerned with and diligently aim to chart the ways in which one's individual experiences, thoughts, and emotions, are transformed and formulated, alongside one's involvement in the external world. For Eliot and Pater, art becomes a bridge to connect external and internal worlds, and this chapter considers in this context the two writers' interweaving of art and human life. In doing so, I reconsider the ways in which Eliot and Pater demonstrate their respective manifestos: "art amplifies our life", and, "art intensifies our life to the moment" by focusing on Eliot's *Romola* and Pater's *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*. Firstly, I discuss Eliot's and Pater's conceptions of art forms that become analogous with their perspectives on human life. I argue that the conception of human life is embodied in symbolic imagery, webs, threads, colour, and

light in Eliot's *Romola* and Pater's *Renaissance*. Moreover, in this first section, I include analysis of the work of Simeon Solomon. Solomon's paintings as a contemporary artist show parallels with these concepts. Solomon's male figures were often criticised for their homoerotic implication, especially for his explicit androgynous male representations.[203] His figures, however, significantly suggest a new element of interweaving: That is fusion with the opposite sex together with a blending of the worship of the body and soul associated with earthly and religious desire. Thus I observe the way in which Solomon's figures resonate with the ideals of Pater. In the second section, I consider Eliot's and Pater's analyses on the relationship between paintings and life. The last section compares their uses of music in their writings.

Evolution of Humanity

The writings of Eliot and Pater are preoccupied with the evolutionary progression of humanity.[204] Indeed, both were strongly impacted by the most influential scientific

[203] The criticism on Solomon's work was partly due to the lack of masculinity in his male figures. For example, a review in *The Guardian* commented on a nude male figure in *Dawn* (1871), exhibited at the Dudley Gallery in 1872, that: "Considering the former contributions of Mr. Solomon to the Dudley Gallery, it seems strange to pass by his works without a word of commendation. But he has taken to draw sickly dreams which can give no healthy pleasure, and his imagination feeds on itself instead of gaining tone and strength by vigorous contact with the fact of nature" See Cited in Colin Cruise, ed., *Love Revealed: Simeon Solomon and the Pre-Raphaelites* (London and New York: Merrell, 2005), p. 110.

[204] U. C. Knoepflmacher points out the synchronised purpose of writing by Eliot and Pater, and notes that the prevalent evolutionary theory in the Victorian period significantly influenced the construction of their ideas. See U C. Knoepflmacher, *Religious Humanism and the Victorian Novel: George Eliot, Walter Pater, and Samuel Butler* (Princeton and New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1970).

thought of the time, namely Charles Darwin's theory of evolution.[205] This revolutionary scientific breakthrough posed questions not only for Eliot and Pater but also for Victorian intellectuals in general, about how the form of human beings would further evolve, together with how external systems including morality, religions, ethics, philosophy, and aesthetics would evolve. Victorian thinkers were especially required to reconcile religion, philosophy, and modern science, including psychology and physiology, and combine the old morality with new values in the later nineteenth century.[206] Thus in this context it can be claimed that Eliot and Pater were drawn to the subject of the Renaissance, since they found in this period some ideal forms when old and new values, Antiquity and Christianity coexisted, alongside new ways of seeing the universe, science and a new concept of art. As W. T. Mitchell suggests, " '[t]he origin of species' is not just a matter of biological evolution then, but of the mechanisms of consciousness as they are described in representational models of the mind."[207] Then Eliot and Pater were already concerned with the evolving mechanism of human consciousness in nineteenth century. The pair attempt to dissect the reconciliation of old and new values, and uncover the extent to which life is a composite of myriad elements; in doing so, they emphasise that one needs to obtain a malleable perspective to amalgamate seemingly dichotomous ideas. As U. C. Knoepflmacher points out: "For Pater, as for George Eliot, truth can be found only by

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[205] Ibid. In addition to this, Darwin's influence on Eliot has been discussed in Gillian Beer's *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009); Sally Shuttleworth, *George Eliot and Nineteenth Century Science: The Make-Believe of a Beginning*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984). With Walter Pater, Richard Dellamora notes that Pater read Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* after the publication in 1859. See *Masculine Desire: The Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Caroline Press, 1990), p. 132.

[206] Knoepflmacher, *Religious Humanism and the Victorian Novel*, p. 5.

[207] W. T Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 33.

looking at a subject from various points of view."[208] In order to address the substance of life, both writers consider art or art criticism to be the superlative medium to convey and intellectually and aesthetically encapsulate the mechanism of an individual consciousness.

Romola was one of Eliot's rare novels to be published in periodical form, appearing in the *Cornhill Magazine* from July 1862 to August 1863. This novel was initially criticised for its focus on external context rather than the creation of profound characters, through its realistic presentation of Florentine society via physical and historical descriptions. According to nineteenth century critics, the protagonist, Romola, was a blurred, weak figure. An article in the *Spectator* in 1864, for example, regards Romola as "not natural" and the reviewer opines that she is "revealed and more suggested than fully painted, though these harder feminine characters always seem to ask to be outlined more strongly than any others."[209] Moreover when Henry James criticised Eliot's later work *Daniel Deronda,* he compared it to *Romola* and disparagingly said that the former was as inadequate as the latter.[210] That which allegedly makes Romola "not natural" could be attributed to her passivity towards her life's trajectory; while yearning for moral righteousness, in other words, striving after that which she can keep hold of, she struggles to reconcile this with Christianity. I hypothesise that the reason why the characterisation of Romola gives a weak impression to critics and readers is that she incorporates a shifting humanity. For Eliot highlights the process of the internal moral evolution under the influence of external

[208] Knoepflmacher, *Religious Humanism and the Victorian Novel*, p. 160.
[209] Cited in David Carol, *George Eliot: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 204.
[210] Ibid. p. 378.

forces and events such as marital and religious life. Instead of incorporating a singular solid form of philosophical and religious value, Romola represents Eliot's more complex view of humanity; the subtle transition of moral consciousness and the reconciliation with opposing values.

"The capability of feeling" for aesthetics is a major theme in Pater's work too. In the Preface to *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, he abandons his mission as an art critic/historian to define beauty, because it is, he suggests, "relative" and "useless."[211] Instead, he maintains that one should prioritise "discrimination" of one's own impression towards art, and questions "[h]ow is my nature modified by its presence and under its influence?"[212] Like Eliot, Pater is concerned with individual modifications and transient moments under the influence of an external reality and he regards "all things and principles of things as inconstant modes."[213] Fascinated by this relationship between constant movements and the seemingly solid and simple form of human life, Pater links the development of art history to that of human sensibility. He states in his chapter entitled 'Winckelmann' that "[t]he arts may thus be ranged in a series which corresponds to a series of developments in the human mind itself."[214] Pater is dedicated to his experiment to investigate the fragments of which human life is comprised. Paul Barolsky states that "[i]n [Pater's] *Renaissance* he transparently rewrites history in a modern idiom, charting Western thought from Greece to the moderns, not merely in the form of a linear progression but as if a unified flux."[215] In Pater's attempts to convey a fragmentation of the formation of human conceptions, in

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[211] *SHR*, p. 3
[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid., p. 118.
[214] Ibid., p. 105.
[215] Paul Barolsky, *Walter Pater's Renaissance* (University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1987), p. 30.

which every view is constantly shifting, like Eliot, he finds it important to illustrate these subtle moments of reconciliation and transition through the medium of art and art criticism.[216]

Weaving Threads between Eliot and Pater

The writings of George Eliot and Walter Pater are closely connected by their common passion and struggle "to see the object as in itself it really is."[217] Yet, as mentioned earlier, those conceptions of life formulated by Eliot and Pater tend to be seen as opposed, partly because Eliot once described Pater's *Studies in the Histories of the Renaissance* as "poisonous" and a "false conception of life."[218] Scholars emphasise Eliot's dislike for Paterian thoughts, whereas Pater's admiration for Eliot's *Romola* is disregarded. Richard Dellamora, emphasising the extent to which Pater's book was scandalous at that time, interprets Eliot's reference to Pater as typical of attacks on his work by "morally conservative liberals."[219] Also Matthew Beaumont quotes the same comment on Pater's book by Eliot, and accounts for it by noting, "[t]he book caused consternation among the more conservative representatives of Victorian culture in

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[216] Wolfgang Iser, *Walter Pater: The Aesthetic Moment*, trans. David Henry Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987), p. 39.
[217] *SHR*, p. 3.
[218] Eliot wrote to John Black Wood in 1873: "I agreed very warmly with the remarks made by your contributor this month on Mr. Pater's book, which seems to me quite poisonous in its false principles of criticism and false conception of life." Eliot is referring to the review by Mrs. Oliphant on Pater's writing in which it is stated that, "It is hard to accept as quite serious the grandiloquent description of life as set forth by the writer in the closing pages, which is half pitiful, half amusing, in its earnest self-persuasion and attempt to look and feel as if so many fine-sounding words must be true. … the book is *rococo* from beginning to end." See *Letters* Vol. V, p. 455.
[219] Richard Dellamora, *Masculine Desire: The Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Caroline Press, 1990), viii.

particular."[220] Just as Dellamora and Beaumont regard Eliot as "morally conservative" or one of "the more conservative representatives of Victorian culture," the oeuvre of Eliot tends to be associated with Victorian conservative morality, whereas Pater is primarily associated with aestheticism as implicitly leading onto modernism. However, I argue, Eliot too is concerned with the function of aesthetics as well as with ethical life, and conversely Pater is concerned with ethical life as well as aesthetics. Indeed, the works of both authors portray the multi-faceted lives of individuals and the necessity of understanding different perspectives on society. As in the manner of Eliot, Pater regards highly the act of seeing from various points of views, and he understands it as the most difficult task. For Pater, the truth varied according to historical changes. Like Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Pater prioritises conveyance of one's sense of fact, rather than external fact, and he believes that it is important to "transcript, not of mere fact but of fact in its infinite variety, as modified by human preference in all its infinitely varied forms."[221] Like Eliot, Pater spins his idea of the web following the creed of "the truth to nature" yet blending it with sensuous and more radical aspects.

In order to understand Eliot's and Pater's aspiration for seeing as it is, it is important to consider the influence of John Ruskin. While I have already noted Eliot's adherence to Ruskin's theory, the relationship between Ruskin and Pater shows complex aspects, hence it deserves more critical attention. Pater read Ruskin's books when he was nineteen years old in 1858, yet he mentions little of the art critic in his writings.[222] In spite of his silence on Ruskin, however, Kenneth Daley has considered

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[220] Matthew Beaumont, 'Introduction' to *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, viii.
[221] *Appreciations*, pp. 10-11.
[222] However, Pater's name was put forward for Ruskin's position of Slade Professor of Art when Ruskin resigned, but it was not successful. See Andrew Leng, 'Pater's Aesthetic Poet: The

the relationship between the two and argued that Pater was, in fact, highly conscious of Ruskin, and that they are similar in that their art theory reflects the collision between transcendental and empirical values. [223] In addition to this outlook, I argue that Ruskin's almost ascetic way of observing a particular thing is adopted in Pater's writing, especially the way in which Ruskin conceives what particular objects compose a whole object.

> In 'Of Truth of Space' in *Modern Painters I*, Ruskin writes that:
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> You can see the texture of a piece of dress, but you cannot see the individual threads which compose it, though they are all felt, and have each of them influence on the eye. [224]

The attempt to see a single thread from a piece of dress while considering of the influence created by the accumulation of threads is what Pater reflects in his Renaissance studies. As Lindsay Smith considers, a manner of observation from a particular part to a whole is prevalent in nineteenth century writings on visual culture,[225] and Ruskin's thread metaphor above eminently suggests this attitude. As I will discuss more later on, the imagery of threads becomes a significant metaphor to read both Pater's and Eliot's writings that chart the history of human minds. The essential resemblance between *Romola* and *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* is the way in which the authors focus on particular and obscured individuals' experiences rather than on generalised experiences of humanity as a whole. Most of the titles of

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Appropriation of Rossetti from Ruskin' in *The Journal of Pre-Raphaelite and Aesthetic Studies* (Spring 1989, pp.42-48), p. 42.

[223] Kenneth Daley, *The Rescue of Romanticism: Walter Pater and John Ruskin* (Athens: Ohio UP, 2001), p. 8.

[224] *Ruskin*, Vol. III, p. 329.

[225] Smith, *Victorian Photography, Painting and Poetry*, p. 18.

Eliot's novels are simply the name of an individual, and in *Romola* Eliot attempted to untangle the personal experience of the eponymous heroine; in doing so she suggests this individual's life in the past is still extending in present forms. In the same way, Pater's *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* is, as J. Hillis Miller argues, about studies of the personalities of each of the Renaissance artists, and moreover, Pater demonstrates his own analysis of them. As Miller implies, Pater suggests that those individual lives are in fact significantly interwoven in the present and to the future.[226]

Although there exists little evidence of direct correspondence between Eliot and Pater, there is one rare example: In her journal, Eliot records a visit to Oxford in 1870 as follows: "At supper were Mr. Jewett, Prof. Henry Smith, Miss E. Smith his sister, Mr. Fowler, author of 'Deductive Logic;' and Mr. Pater, writer of articles on Leonardo da Vinci, Morris etc."[227] This casual entry tantalises the reader to imagine what Eliot and Pater might have talked about during this dinner meeting. One may speculate that they discussed each other's work and mutual interests, German philosophers and writers, such as Johan Wolfgang von Goethe. Eliot's partner, George Henry Lewes, had published the second edition of *The Life and Works of Goethe* in 1858. In his book, Lewes describes the life of Goethe and his relationship with Charlotte von Stein in the following way: "All men of genius go through this process of *crystallisation*"; "It is a silver thread woven among *the many-coloured threads* which formed the tapestry of his life."[228] [Italics Mine] Indeed, one of the chapters is entitled 'Many-Coloured

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[226] J. Hillis Miller, 'Walter Pater: A Partial Portrait' in *Daedalus*, Vol. 105, No. 1 (Winter, 1976, pp. 97-113), p. 101.
[227] *Letters* ,Vol. V, p. 100.
[228] Cited in Anne Varty, 'The Crystal Man: A Study in "Diaphaneitè"' in Laurel Brake and Ian Small, eds., *Pater in the 1990s* (Greensboro: University of North Carolina ELT Press, 1991, pp. 201-15), p. 208; p. 211

Threads.' [229] Referring to these two quotations, Anne Varty points out that the image of crystallisation and the metaphor of threads in Lewes's writing inspired Pater's writings in his *Renaissance*.[230] Furthermore, as we have seen earlier, Ruskin's metaphor of threads may have been extended into Lewes's writings, as both Eliot and Lewes admired Ruskin. Not only Lewes's *The Life of Goethe*, but also his series of scientific writings, *The Problems of Life and Mind* (1875-79), significantly use the image of threads to explain the invisible connection between one's interior world and external reality.[231]

Imagery of threads is profoundly employed by Eliot in *Romola* too. Moreover, following the publication of *Romola*, Eliot uses images of threads to an even greater degree in *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda.* Indeed, Reva Stump observes a substantial number of the metaphors involving webs in Eliot's novels.[232] She argues that the web imagery in her work represents "the fabric of human life."[233] In *Middlemarch*, Eliot thus states her purpose of writing: "I at least have so much to do in unravelling certain human lots, and seeing how they were woven and interwoven, that all the light I can command must be concentrated on this particular web, and not disperse over that tempting range of relevancies called the universe." [234] Likewise, the thread imagery in Pater's writing, appears first in 'Diaphaneitè' (1864) and he

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[229] George Henry Lewes, *The Life and Works of Goethe*, ed., Havelock Ellis (London: J. M. Dent & Son LTD, 1959).
[230] Varty, 'The Crystal Man: A Study in "Diaphaneitè"' in *Pater in the 1990s.*
[231] George Levine, 'George Eliot's Hypothesis of Reality' in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (June, 1980, pp. 1-28), p. 3.
[232] Stump, *Movement and Vision in George Eliot's Novels,* p. 141.
[233] Ibid. Also see the reference of the threads by other scholars in W. J. Harvey, *The Art of George Eliot,* pp. 242-3; George Levine, 'George Eliot's Hypothesis of Reality', p. 9; J. Hillis Miller, 'Optic and Semiotic in "Middlemarch"' in John Peck, ed., *Middlemarch: George Eliot* (London: Macmillan, 1992, pp. 65-83), p. 75.
[234] *M*, p. 170.

continues to use it in his later piece 'The School of Giorgione' (1877). As with Eliot's use of metaphor, Pater's thread images are closely linked to his observation of intricate art, and its correspondence to human perception and life. I explore how the texts of Eliot and Pater are interwoven by the metaphor of the threads. I read the imagery of webs and threads as a modern analysis of individual life. By using this imagery, the authors demonstrate the way in which one's life can be carefully fragmented and yet continue to spin its web in the future, and suggest that we need to reread connections between the inner perception of a human being and that perception influenced by the external world.[235]

Threads of Romola

The eponymous character of *Romola* incorporates experiences of Hellenism and Christianity. The heroine grows up with her father, a classics scholar, without any involvement in society. Thus her life is described as a "self-repressing colourless life."[236] She initially detests Christianity as "sickly superstition which led men and women, with eyes too week for the daylight, to sit in dark swamps and try to read

[235] Pater's use of the imagery of thread and light has been also mentioned in Lene Østernark-Johansen, *Walter Pater and the Language of Sculpture* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011); Rachel Teukolsky, 'The Politics of Formalist Art Criticism: Pater's "School of Giorgione"' in *Walter Pater: The Transparencies of Desire*, eds. Laurel Brake, Lesley Higgins, and Carolyn Williams (Greensboro: University of North Carolina ELT Press, 2002, pp. 151-169).
[236] *R*, p. 128.

human destiny by the chance flame of wandering vapours."[237] However, as she suffers in her martial life with her epicurean Greek husband, Tito Melema, she becomes inspired by the fanatical Savonarola. Nonetheless, Romola fails to find either a contributing role in society or an ideal form of ethical life through her faith in either Tito or Savonarola. What disappoints her is that she cannot obtain a concrete and simple form of human life within the social constitution of marriage nor the principles of Savonarola. She strives for a simple human bond able to consume the energy of her affection and reverence, and the narrator says "she had appropriated no theories: she had simply felt strong in the strength of affection, and life without that energy came to her as an entirely new problem."[238] Marital life and the church represented, Romola believed, ideal ethical systems and institutions that she expected to consume and regenerate her simple moral goodness. But she finds only hidden egoism in them. While her exposure to the discipline of Savonarola gives her "an immediate satisfaction for moral needs,"[239] her involvement with public life is forced to be reduced into "narrow devices."[240] Romola attempts to abandon both the role of a wife and her devotion to Savonarola, yet finds an ultimate ethical form through the experience of tending to Jewish plague victims at an unknown place, which leads her to the realisation that human relationships do not need any institutions or principles but only sympathy. In this novel, Eliot charts a historical transition of the human mind, through Romola's involvement and relationships, from Hellenism to early Christianity. By doing this, the novelist emphasises not what transforms Romola but what her humanity has incorporated as a woman with little freedom and few choices, and how

[237] Ibid., p. 324.
[238] Ibid., pp. 321-2.
[239] Ibid., p. 388.
[240] Ibid., p. 501.

her whole life is woven through two distinct threads of experiences.[241]

Similarly, images of threads appear in *Silas Marner* (1861), which was written during an interval in the period of the composition of *Romola*. Silas is a linen weaver, who is isolated only engaging himself with spinning threads to make linen everyday; however, this activity merely acts to "reduce his life to the unquestioning activity of a spinning insect."[242] However, Silas begins to integrate himself into a communal life after having adopted Eppie. Thus he restarts weaving the linen of his own life and regains substantial connection to the web of the community. As Fred Thomson implies, although Silas actually weaves threads, it does not yield social participation nor even a substantial human life; thus the threads he is actually spinning ironically contrast with his lack of the thread of human relation connecting to community.[243]

In *Romola*, meanwhile, the protagonist is symbolically portrayed as Ariadne in an image painted by Piero di Cosimo.[244] In the myth, Ariadne helps Theseus to kill the Minotaur by providing him with a sword and a ball of thread. The thread helps him to escape from the labyrinth of King Minos. However, Romola as Ariadne struggles to find her own thread to solve her problem. In the novel, there are two types of threads. One is an illusionary type, the thread of human relation: As in *Silas Marner*, this thread provides the protagonist the illusionary satisfaction that she is engaged with society. The other thread is a solid thread connecting inner life and external experiences that cultivates sympathy for others as well as her independent self, which, Eliot believes,

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[241] William J. Sullivan, 'Piero di Cosimo and the Higher Primitivism in Romola' in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (March, 1972, pp. 390-405), p. 400.
[242] George Eliot, *Silas Marner*, ed. R. T. Jones (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Classics, 1999), p. 14.
[243] Thomson, Fred C. 'The Theme of Alienation in Silas Marner' in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, Vol. 20 (June 1965, pp. 69-84).
[244] The image is mentioned in chapter 18, 20 and 36 in the novel. As Chapter III shows, the image of Ariadne appears in *Middlemarch*, in relation to the pair of Dorothea Brooke and Rosamond Vincy.

creates a substantial human life.

At the outset of the proem of *Romola*, it is stated that: "Our resuscitated Spirit was not a pagan philosopher, nor philosophising pagan poet, but a man of the fifteenth century, inheriting its strange web of belief and unbelief."[245] Romola is caught in this "strange web of belief and unbelief," which is mingled with the strictly institutionalised dualism of good and evil, and right and wrong. Romola seeks to connect her individual moral discipline to that of the external world in order to achieve her simple moral aspiration to be useful to others. However, there is little chance for her as a woman to be involved in societal fellowships, except through marriage or religion. It is "the sense of comradeship"[246] that Romola immediately expects in the first meeting with Tito Melema, and she assumes that the ties of marriage will provide her with not only an outward but also "inward bond of love."[247] Romola does not doubt the certainty of a sacred and unbreakable bond in the realm of marriage. When Romola loses her loyalty to Tito after he secretly sells her diseased father's library collection, "she seemed benumbed to everything but inward throbbings, and began to feel the need of some hard contact. She drew her hands tight along the harsh knotted cord that hung from her waist."[248] This yearning for something solid she can grasp epitomises her act of searching for a concrete moral direction and her need to be connected with something certain.

Romola's sense of loss of tethering in her married life is subsequently re-woven into the realm of religious discipline by Savonarola. When Romola finds a new way of

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[245] *R*, p. 6.
[246] Ibid., p. 64.
[247] Ibid., p. 319.
[248] Ibid., p. 321.

life under the dogma of Savonarola, it is claimed that: "She felt the dreariness, yet her courage was high, like that of a seeker who has come on new signs of gold. She was going to thread life by a fresh clue. She had thrown all the energy of her will into renunciation."[249] However, later the narrator implies her passivity in the act: "Romola's trust in Savonarola was something like a rope suspended securely by her path, making her step elastic while she grasped it; if it were suddenly removed, no firmness of the ground she trod could save her from staggering, or perhaps from failing." [250] While threading her own life into the discipline of Savonarola, a rope provided to her by Savonarola became another illusion: For Romola, the discipline of the church/Savonarola becomes a solid truth, yet the thread of Savonarola she holds on to, in fact, connects to his personal and egoistic desire to obtain political power. Barbara Hardy points out that Romola and Savonarola become paralleled in the novel in a way that corresponds to their struggles with their endeavour to establish a simple form of righteousness.[251] They both strive for personal fulfilment through social duty. Describing the struggle of Savonarola for the prosperity of God's Kingdom, the narrator states:

> … the struggle of a mind possessed by a never-silent hunger after purity and simplicity, yet caught in a tangle of egoistic demands, false ideas, and difficult outward conditions, that made simplicity impossible. [252]

Eliot suggests that even a desire for simplicity is inevitably entangled with other elements, as in the case of Savonarola whose passion for the prosperity of God's

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[249] *R*, p. 365.
[250] Ibid., p. 389.
[251] Barbara Hardy, *The Novels of George Eliot: A Study in Form* (London: The Athlone Press, 1959), p. 86.
[252] *R*, p. 490.

Kingdom is in fact an extended thread of his egoistic desire for his political success. Thus Eliot maps out the entangled threads across and between internal desires and external conditions.

The spinning web of personal egoistic desire is also described in the other male characters such as Romola's father Bardo de' Bardi and Tito Melema.[253] The former laments his difficult life as a blind classis scholar, saying that "I had desired to gather, as into a firm web, all the threads that my research had laboriously disentangled."[254] And it is Romola, as a daughter, who feels a strong sense of obligation to continue spinning his web of research. Yet, Bardo firmly believes that women are inferior to men, and doubts Romola's intellect. Bardo does not realise the fact that his studies sacrifice his daughter's life, as Romola commits herself to help his father's study, while confining herself in his narrow antique world and relinquishing involvement with modern society. Similarly, Romola's husband Tito makes an illusionary relationship to Romola and the other woman, the peasant Tessa, for the sake of his own desire and pleasure: Tito spins an illusion to innocent Tessa, leading her to believe that she is married to him, and leads a double life with her and his real wife. As Jennifer Uglow notes, "Tito span a web of selfishness to trap himself."[255] The narrator describes his condition thus: "he had spun a web about himself and Tessa, which he felt incapable of breaking"; "it seems to him that the web had gone spinning itself in spite of him, life a growth over which he had no power."[256] Thus Romola's web of life is entangled with a number of egoistic actions of men spinning webs for the sake of their own personal

[253] Jennifer Uglow, *George Eliot* (London: Virago Press), pp. 164-167.
[254] *R*, p. 51.
[255] Uglow, *George Eliot*, p. 167.
[256] *R*, p. 299.

achievements. These characters whose lives are constructed from illusory threads and webs appear in *Middlemarch* too.[257]

Eliot's Unweaving and Weaving

What Eliot illuminates in *Romola* is that the web of one's life is constantly spinning while old experiences are incorporated within it. Although Romola detaches herself from Bardo, Tito, and Savonarola, she eventually connects with society through an act of altruism. When she finally finds her role in helping people around her, Romola's ethical life becomes more solid. She confirms that her sympathy for others is enforced by her own experience of sorrow in the past. Romola's sympathy for others is itself woven by the entwined experience of sorrow against both pagan and Christian backdrops; her experience culminates in a simple connection to others and thus her ethical life eliminates social and religious boundaries as shown by her tending to a Jewish baby in Chapter 68. When Romola decides to go back to Florence after tending to sick people, the narrator reinterprets her past in the following way:

> The experience was like a new baptism to Romola. In Florence the simpler relations of the human being to his fellow-men had been complicated for her with all the special ties of marriage, the State, and religious discipleship, and when these had disappointed her trust, the shock seemed to have shaken her aloof from life and stunned her sympathy. But now she said, 'It was mere baseness in me to desire death. If everything else is doubtful, this suffering that

[257] For example, Reve Stump suggests that the characters including Lydgate, Rosamond, Casaubon, and Bulstrode link to these webs of egoism. Stump, *Movement and Vision in George Eliot's Novels,* p. 149.

> I can help is certain; if the glory of the cross is an illusion, the sorrow is only the truer.' [258]

Eliot implies above that individual experiences and sympathy produce a better, stronger thread. For Eliot, individual life continuously spins the web of experiences in the external and internal realms, such that it becomes a substantial thread connecting the self to the world. The experience of Romola indicates that one may reduce marital and religious life into a delusion of a simple thread representing the whole system, when in fact, they are actually entangled with "the many twisted condition of life."[259] In the novel, the painter Piero di Cosimo significantly implies that philosophy is "… spinning lies to account for life."[260] The main point for Eliot is not that the visible relations, marital and religious life, fail to provide the essential part of the individual life. It is rather that one's idea that there is an ultimate ethic in these social laws and in this form of fellowship is a naïve perspective and an unexplored assumption.

On Romola's returning to Florence, the narrator writes that:

> There was still a thread of pain within her, testifying to those words of Fra Girolamo, that she could not cease to be a wife. Could anything utterly cease for her that had once mingled itself with the current of her heart's blood? [261]

Eliot emphasises that Romola's personal experience of sorrow remains as an essential thread that can connect her to others to cultivate human relations through the act of sympathy for them. This part is epitomised by the ending of the novel, for Romola decides to take care of her cousin, and Tito's secret lover, Tessa and their children.

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[258] *R*, p. 560.
[259] Ibid., p. 561.
[260] Ibid., p. 186.
[261] Ibid., p. 561.

Romola tells Tito's son Lillo a story of her husband and Savonarola, thus passing her experiences on to the next generation, and the presence of the two are never eliminated from her life. Thereby the imagery of threads, for Eliot, helps to convey and connect with the formation of inconceivable labyrinths in the life of the reader. Romola's web of life continues to weave and unweave the web of the experiences with Tito/Epicurean and Savonarola/Christian and their subsequent renunciation. In the novel, the narrator reveals the fact that Romola initially "had no innate taste for tending the sick and clothing the ragged, like some women to whom the details of such work are welcome in themselves, simply as an occupation."[262] Romola's spontaneous action of tending Jewish people initiated her new organ of humanity, unlike her past experience of tending sick people in order to achieve her affinity with Savonarola, not from a spontaneous sense of duty. Yet her actions, tending to a Jewish baby and Tito's children, result in her spinning the web of her simple aspiration to social goodness while disentangling from the threads of male personal desires. As such, Eliot's deployment of the image of the thread, in effect, uncovers the possible extension and reformation of our inner life.

Threads in Pater's Writing

While the web of society is entangled and illusionary for Romola, personal experience and sympathy yield a thread that provides a sense of connection to external worlds. Likewise, Pater disregards the thread that leads to the semblance of

[262] *R*, p. 387.

the external social life, which for him is visible but not substantial. Instead, he encourages the reader to thread an individual web of contemplative life.

In 'Diaphaneitè' Pater defines the diaphaneitè type or crystal clear nature, explaining in the later part of the essay that it is "*a thread of pure white light* one might disentwine from the tumultuary richness of Goethe's nature."[263] [Italics Mine] This thread of white light, which is deployed into a "golden thread" in his *Renaissance* and other writings especially in 'The School of Giorgione,' becomes an essential image by which Pater articulates his conception of the ideal forms of individual life.[264] As noted earlier, this crystal aspect in thinkers examined in Lewes's *The Life of Goethe*, as Varty suggests, influenced Pater's creation of diaphaneitè character, and this essay also becomes an inspiration for the essay on Winckelmann later, in which Pater writes that Goethe is the embodiment of Winckelmann's spirit.

Pater's metaphor of the thread of white light or golden thread indicates both visibility and invisibility, in other words, one's way of seeing, subjectivity and objectivity. As the term diaphaneitè implies something that is colourless, the diaphanous man is difficult to recognise in the earthly world; thus Pater encourages the reader to perceive the translucent dimensions of our life in order to obtain a new sensibility.[265] Like the saints, artists, and speculative thinkers who are aloof and to some degree separated from society, the transparent type self-sufficiently spins the thread of pure white light.

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[263] *SHR*, p. 139.
[264] Varty, 'The Crystal Man: A study in "Diaphaneitè"' in *Pater in the 1990s,* p. 211.
[265] Joseph Palencik, 'Beauty in Simplicity: Walter Pater and Diaphaneitè' in *Literature and Aesthetic*, Vol. 16. (July, 2006, pp. 133.143); Benjamin Morgan, 'Aesthetic Freedom: Walter Pater and the Politics of Autonomy' in *ELH*, Vol. 77, No. 3 (Fall 2010, pp. 731-756).

Pater's invisible man could be a twist on Ruskin's concept of invisible artists: In his *Modern Painters I* Ruskin states that "[An artist] becomes great when he becomes invisible."[266] For Ruskin, in order to observe the world objectively, artists need to eliminate their subjectivities. By contrast, Pater's invisible man puts an emphasis on one's subjectivity, yet still eliminating institutionalised ways of perceiving. Pater explains that his invisible type "… is that fine edge of light, where the elements of our moral nature refine themselves to the burning point. It crosses rather than follows the main current of the world's life."[267] While one tends to assume that the main current of ethical life is an objective truth, what Pater suggests in this account is that while acknowledging the visible line of the common form of perception, individuals need to weave their perception by crossing the main line rather than blindly following it. This image of crossing the main line evokes the process of weaving a tapestry, which is made by the continuous crossing of the thread against the main vertical visible line.

Thus the metaphor of Pater's weaving connotes blending of opposing elements. Wolfgang Iser summarises Pater's conception in the *Renaissance*: "Human life, he says, both physical and spiritual, is woven together in a ceaseless movement of experience."[268] Although Iser does not address the thread imagery in Pater's writing, he spontaneously uses the term "woven." In 'Diaphanetè,' Pater delineates the type of pure white thread explaining: "[l]ike all the higher forms of inward life this character is a subtle blending and interpenetration of intellectual, moral and spiritual elements."[269] Varty thus points out that "It is a feature of Pater's portrayal of ideal man that ethical

[266] *Ruskin,* Vol. III, p. 470.
[267] *SHR*, p. 136.
[268] Iser, *The Aesthetic Moment*, p. 29.
[269] *SHR*, p. 137.

and aesthetic categories of judgement are merged, so that the aesthetic subsumes the ethical." [270] The thread of pure white light is woven by intellectual, ethical, sensuous, aesthetic and spiritual elements and by disentwining oneself from the fixed or institutionalised way of thinking that dichotomises the spiritual and the material, the secular and the religious, and ethics and aesthetics.

Pater sees the embodiment of such blending as the fusion of beauty and intellectualism in Greek sculpture. In his essay 'Winckelmann,' on describing the Panathenaic frieze, he admires the sculpture that evokes: "This colourless unclassified purity of life, with its blending and interpenetration of intellectual, spiritual, and physical elements, still folded together, pregnant with the possibilities of a whole world closed within it."[271] Pater praises the form of art that consists of different elements woven together, as representing pure perception.

Pater's Unweaving and Weaving

Winckelmann, for Pater, is an ideal artist/art critic who embodies the element of diaphaneitè. Indeed, substantial sentences in the essay of 'Diaphaneitè' are repeated in the essay of 'Winkelmann'. In the later essay, while Pater emphasises the pure affinity between Winckelmann and Greek sculpture, he also reconsiders art criticism established by other writers such as Lessing and Ruskin. Thus, Pater presents the threads of human minds encapsulated in Greek sculpture, Winckelmann, and other art

[270] Varty, 'The Crystal Man: A Study in "Diaphaneitè"'in *Pater in the 1990s,* p. 212.
[271] *SHR*, p. 109.

critics. In so doing, Pater unweaves those fixed and main trends of the aesthetic theory and weaves his own web of art criticism.

Pater believes that Winckelmann can perceive the construction of the web of Greek sculpture, because he "catches the thread of a whole sequence of laws in some hollowing of the hand, or dividing the hair; he seems to realise that fancy of the reminiscence of a forgotten knowledge hidden for a time in the mind itself."[272] For Pater, Winckelmann is equivalent with the Greek sculpture itself, as his intellect spontaneously shows an affinity to the beauty of the sculpture. Pater thus equates studying Winckelmann with studying Greek sculpture, as he writes that Winckelmann "possessed [the Greek spirit] in his own nature, itself life a relic of classical antiquity laid open by accident to our alien modern atmosphere."[273] It is thus relevant for Pater to present his observation upon Greek sculpture within the subject of Winckelmann.

In his analysis on antique sculpture, Pater implicitly reconsiders the prevalent view. Firstly, he challenges the view of Lessing that sculpture is inferior to poetry, for the former medium is static and limited its expression. Pater, on the other hand, praises the limitation of sculpture, explaining that "Because by this limitation it becomes a perfect medium of expression for one peculiar motive of the imaginative intellect."[274] Thus sculpture, for Pater, can convey the most direct expression of human thought. Meanwhile, Ruskin also defines sculpture as "the representation of an idea," yet in his *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), he emphasises the superiority of architecture: For Ruskin, architecture is the "real thing," in contrast to sculpture,

[272] *SHR*, p. 95.
[273] Ibid., P. 110.
[274] *SHR*, p. 106.

and the sight of the former "contributes to his mental health, power and pleasure."[275] Pater then reverses Ruskin's idea.[276] He writes that Architecture can only "express by vague hint or symbol the spirit or mind of the artist" and "their expression is not really sensuous at all."[277] For Pater, sculpture is the "real thing" because it, "unlike architecture, deals immediately with man" and becomes "one entire medium of spiritual expression."[278] Pater states that sculpture provides the beholder a new pleasure and mental development, as the spirit of Winckelmann demonstrates. By studying Winckelmann, Pater thus seeks to show a simple thread of human minds generated by Greek art while reconsidering the prevalent views of art criticism.

In the essay 'Winckelmann', Pater states that "[w]hat modern art has to do in the service of culture is so to rearrange the details of modern life, so to reflect it, that it may satisfy the spirit."[279] In 'The School of Giorgione,' then, Pater also demonstrates the modern rearrangement of art history by defining the art school itself. Indeed, Pater employs a number of images of threads to describe different paintings, and weave them together into a school that inherits the spirit of the school of Giorgione.

Rachel Teukolsky and Lene Østermark-Johansen define Pater's 'The School of Giorgione' as a response to *A New History of Painting in North Italy* of 1871 by J. A. Crowe and G. B. Cavalcaselle.[280] In the book, Crowe and Cavalcaselle reconsider the

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[275] *Ruskin,* Vol. VIII*,* p. 27.
[276] Isobel Armstrong reads that Pater's Renaissance is "a repudiation of Ruskin's Grotesque." See *Victorian Poetry*, pp. 388-9.
[277] *SHR*, p. 105.
[278] Ibid.
[279] Ibid., p. 116.
[280] Rachel Teukolsky,'The Politics of Formalist Art Criticism: Pater's "School of Giorgione"' in Laurel Brake, Lesley Higgins, Carolyn Williams, eds., *Walter Pater: Transparencies of Desir*e (Greensboro: University of North Carolina ELT Press, 2002), pp. 151-169; Lene Østermark-Johansen*, Walter Pater and the Language of Sculpture*.

authorship of works by Venetian painters, and as a result, a large number of paintings by Giorgione are reclassified. [281] Pater, meanwhile, questions the act of the accurate attribution of authorship. He criticises them as "new Vasari" and states that ". . . the great traditional reputation, woven with so profuse demand on men's admiration, has been scrutinised thread by thread; and what remains of the most vivid and stimulating of Venetian masters . . . has been reduced almost to a name by his most recent critics."[282] Instead of investigating visible historical threads, such as authorship and attributions based upon historical fact, it is more significant for Pater to understand the invisible and tangential threads that make up the metaphorical web of Giorgionesque paintings. Thus Pater crosses the main line established by Crowe and Cavalcaselle to weave a new tapestry of the Giorgione school.

In doing so, Pater deals not only with the paintings he attributes to Giorgione but also with those of other artists. The web of Giorgione is reinforced by the perceptible delineations of golden threads in art works. For example, Pater describes the colouring of Titian's Lace-girl as a "weaving of light, as just perceptible gold threads".[283] In the same essay, the light effect in an etching by M. Alphonse Legros is described as "this sudden inweaving of gold thread through the texture of the haystack."[284] These actual images of threads in paintings by different artists from different times encapsulate the spirit of Giorgione. Historical facts tend to become a dominant line to interweave the present to the past in apprehending the facts of art history, but Pater prioritises

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[281] Teukolsky, 'The Politics of Formalist Art Criticism: Pater's "School of Giorgione"' in *Walter Pater: Transparencies of Desir*e, p. 152.
[282] *SHR*, p. 129.
[283] Ibid., p. 123. Here Pater misattributed the painting to Titian. It is now believed to be by Sofonisba Anguissola. See a note by Matthew Beaumont in *SHR*, p. 182.
[284] *SHR*, p. 125.

subjective perception received from the arts. He demonstrates the way in which he as the viewer of paintings is particularly drawn to the beautiful delineation of golden threads and how he relates in a personal and emotional fashion to those particular fragments. Whereas the reattribution of Giorgione's work by Crowe and Cavalcaselle does not help us to understand the true essence of Giorgione, the rearrangement of the artist by Pater involves his unweaving and weaving of the tapestry of Giorgione woven from the many threads of the spirits of many artists.

Such an act of unweaving historical facts in order to perceive their true essence can be seen in *Romola*. After Savonarola is arrested, his trial and the confession of his invented prophesy and his spiritual vision obtained under brutal torture are published in print (Chapter 71). Romola reads this official documentation, and becomes suspicious of the description of Savonarola's confession. She contemplates his true motivation while comparing it with her past experiences under the influence of this priest. In spite of the accusation of false spirituality, Romola translates his corruption as "a gradual entanglement in which he struggled, not a contrivance encouraged by success."[285] She believes his initial motivation to have sprung from sheer ethical reasons and regards him to have been led astray by "the blending of ambition with belief in the supremacy of goodness,"[286] because her experience is parallel to this entanglement. Thus here Romola unweaves the information from the official document and weaves the history of Savonarola into her own interpretation by sympathising with his situation again. Her empirical interpretation leads her to understand the true nature of Savonarola which is hidden in the form of forged

[285] *R*, p. 572.
[286] Ibid., p. 573.

historical documents.

The use of the metaphor of threads by Eliot and Pater demonstrates that the pair hold in high regard the system of human perception. Especially, recognition of particularity in common objects and discriminating eyes are important for both Eliot and Pater. Pater states in his 'Conclusion' that "it is only the roughness of the eye that makes any two persons, things, situations, seem alike."[287] Moreover, using the image of a web, he also states that: "That clear perpetual outline of face and limb is but an image of ours under which we group them—as design in a web, the actual threads of which pass out beyond it."[288] As the way in which one perceives human physique is fixed under a certain common conception already, our impressions of external reality may be shaped by our limited transfixed knowledge. Lewes in his *Problems of Life and Mind* observes that our impression of external objects is nothing but relative to our subjective knowledge:

> …Perception as the assimilation of the Object by the Subject, in the same way that Nutrition is the assimilation of the Medium by the Organism. Out of the general web of Existence certain threads may be detached and rewoven into a special group—the subject—and this sentient group will in so far be different from the larger group—the Object; but whatever different arrangement the threads may take on, they are always threads of the original web, they are not different threads…..The Subject is inseparable from the Object.[289]

Eliot and Pater acknowledge this observation that one's inner mind is continuously detached and rewoven due to external reality. While Pater's diaphaneitè types encapsulate the web of spirituality and physicality, he also sees the entangled

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[287] *SHR*, p. 120.
[288] Ibid., p. 118.
[289] Lewes, *Problems of Life and Mind*, First Serious, Vol. I (London: Trubner&Co., 1874), p. 189.

web in human impressions. Pater attempts to unravel the complicated system of human impressions, as they, like the arts, can be dissected into many pieces. Iser observes that such impressions, for Pater, are "the ultimate point of contact between man and world." [290] Thus, they constitute threads connecting the interior and the outer world. In his 'Conclusion,' Pater describes the movement impressions make in the following way:

> To such a tremulous wisp constantly reforming itself on the stream, to a single shaper impression, with a sense in it, a relic more or less fleeting, of such moments gone by, what is *real* in our life fines itself down. It is with the movement, the passage and dissolution of impressions, images, sensations, that analysis leaves off,-- that continual vanishing away, that *strange perpetual weaving and unweaving of ourselves*. [291] [Second Italics Mine]

For Pater, it is important to obtain a sense that even if an impression seems to be concrete and solid, the whole composite of one's collected impressions is a continuously changing formation and initial perceptions of true nature remain like kaleidoscopic movements. Will Ladislaw's words in *Middlemarch* embody Pater's conception of single impressions under perpetual formation as seen in during a conversation on art between Ladislaw and Dorothea, in which the former says:

> 'Oh, there is a great deal in the feeling for art which must be acquired' said Will . . . 'Art is an old language with a great many artificial affected styles, and sometimes the chief pleasure one gets out of knowing them is the mere sense of knowing. I enjoy the art of all sorts here immensely; but I suppose if I could pick my enjoyment to pieces I should find it made up of *many different threads*. There is something in daubing a little one's self, and having an idea of the process.'[292] [Italics Mine]

Eliot demonstrates how, especially in front of works of art, our impression is blended

[290] Iser, *The Aesthetic Moment*, p. 36.
[291] *SHR*, p. 119.
[292] *M*, p. 238.

with the satisfaction in the fact that we are viewing historical images from which we believe we feel a historical sense.

Golden Threads in Paintings: The Affinity of Simeon Solomon with Pater

The paintings of Simeon Solomon, a contemporary and close friend of Pater, convey ideas Pater develops in his work. In particular, the image of a golden thread with white light is eminently suggested in his works, *Mystery of Faith* (1864), *A Bishop of the Eastern Church* (1874) and *Aaron with the Scrolls of the Law* (1875). In each of these paintings, male figures are engaged in different ritual activities and they are also united by the colours of white and gold. In other words, different religions are merged with aesthetic elements. In his review of Solomon's poetic prose work 'A Vision of Love Revealed in Sleep' (1871) Swinburne describes Solomon's painting as "at once east and west, of Greek and Hebrew. So much indeed does this fresh interfusion of influences give tone and shape to his imagination, that I have heard him likened on this ground to Heine, as a kindred Hellenist of the Hebrews"[293]: "No Venetian ever took truer delight in glorious vestures, in majestic embroideries, in the sharp deep sheen and glowing refraction of golden vessels."[294] Solomon often conveys a single figure without any particular narrative, but his combination of simple compositions with dramatic

[293] 'Simeon Solomon: Notes on his "A Vision of Love" and Other Studies' in *Dark Blue,* ed. John C Freund, Vol. 1 March to August 1871 (London: Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, pp. 569-7), p. 569.
[294] Ibid., p. 572.

colouring invites multidimensional interpretations. Prettejohn opines that:

> Although Solomon represents pagan, Jewish, Catholic and Orthodox forms of worship separately, on different canvases, rather than blending them into one transcendent form of worship, the aspiration is perhaps analogous to that of 'mingling' the sexes in the image of the androgyne.[295]

As in the metaphor of Pater's golden thread Solomon's individual single male figures can be seen to be interwoven with opposing elements, such as spirituality and aesthetics, men and women. In both of the essays 'Diaphaneitè' and 'Winckelmann,' Pater highlights that the beauty of Greek sculpture can be attributed to "a sexless beauty" which reflects "a moral sexlessness."[296] And Solomon's paintings present those elements of "sexlessness" in his aesthetised male figures which is deprived of the aspects of Victorian masculinity as are often represented in their sturdy physiques.

In the *Mystery of Faith* [Fig. 9], the robe, in white and gold, which completely wraps the figure, is illuminated by a white light together with the golden ornament for a Eucharistic wafer. This distinctive presentation has been compared with James McNeill Whistler's *Symphony in White No.1* (1862).[297] Since the wafer is believed to be the body of Christ in the painting, the priest and the wafer, are thus reflected against each other. The wafer is gently held in the priest's hand, which is covered with a robe that is also wrapped in gentle colour. His eyes are transfixed on the sacramental bread and create a tension indicating that he is seeking spiritual or physical communication.

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[295] Elizabeth Prettejohn*, Art for Art's Sake: Aestheticism in Victorian Painting* (New Heaven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 86.
[296] *SHR*, p. 139.
[297] Colin Cruise, *Love Revealed: Simeon Solomon and the Pre-Raphaelite*, p. 131; 'Critical Connection and Quotational Strategies: Allegory and Aestheticism in Pater and Simeon Solomon' in Erica Clements and Lesley Higgins, eds., *Victorian Aesthetic Conditions and Pater Across Art* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, pp. 68-82), p. 69.

Yet, although the wafer, as Christ's body, draws the collective attention of the attendants in the ceremony, Solomon exclusively focuses on a personal moment, namely the spiritual relationship between the priest and the sacred object.

The contact between the actual body and the representation of one's faith can be seen in *Aaron with the Scrolls of the Law.* [Fig. 10] In this Jewish image, Aaron is presented in glorious vesture. The man embraces the scroll rather than carrying it and his eyes are meditatively closed. The painting, thus, indicates a sensual physical communication between him and the scroll. Moreover, the composition bears a resemblance to a younger and more erotically charged figure in *Carrying the Scrolls of the Law* (1867). In that painting, the colour of his clothing and the prominent, sensuous red colour of the object are erotically united and melting into one another. Both paintings indicate the interfusion of physical and spiritual connections and the earthly desire for sacred objects. Yet the scrolls in the later work of Aaron blend with the vesture even more harmoniously, uniting physically through the blending of colour. Colin Cruise observes that in Solomon's use of white and gold "a 'harmony' of the visible beauties of colour is subverted by an arcane narrative about the power of the invisible." [298] This golden colour connotes both visibility and invisibility. The physical and visible light and colour on the vestment of the male figures thus

[298] Cruise, 'Critical Connections and Quotational Strategies: Allegory and Aestheticism in Pater and Simeon Solomon' in *Victorian Aesthetic Conditions and Pater Across Art*, p. 71.

Fig.9

Simeon Solomon*, Mystery of Faith* (1870), watercolour, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight.

Fig. 10

Simeon Solomon, *Aaron with the Scrolls of the Law* (1875), oil, Southampton City Art Gallery, Southampton

represents invisible desire within. As in the diaphaneitè type by Pater in which "a mind of taste is lightened up by some spiritual ray within,"[299] Solomon's delineation of light denotes the combination of spiritual and sensuous rays within.

In 'Diaphaneitè' Pater notes that "the artist and he who has treated life in the spirit of art desires only to be shown to the world as he really is; as he comes nearer and nearer to perfection, the veil of an outer life not simply expressive of the inward becomes thinner and thinner."[300] This aspect corresponds to the works of Solomon. The painter clearly expresses his homoerotic desire, and his creation is conveyed through the unification of spirituality and sensuality in one perfect form.

References to Painting

In this section, I examine the ways in which Eliot and Pater also come together by making use of artistic media, especially paintings, to signify the intricacies of human minds and transitional life in their writings. In *Romola*, Eliot introduces the actual Renaissance painter Piero di Cosimo as a character and there are substantial references to the visual arts. However, as Witemeyer suggests, most of the paintings and portraits by Piero described in the novel are, in fact, fictional.[301] Thus Eliot depicts the paintings created by her own imaginations. I would like to consider the role of

[299] *SHR*, p. 137.
[300] Ibid.
[301] Witemeyer, *George Eliot and the Visual Arts*, p. 200. Meanwhile, Hilary Fraser discusses the likelihood that Piero di Cosimo's painting, especially the painting of Tito as a traitor, is not fictive but bears a resemblance to Titian's *Il Bravo*. See Hilary Fraser, 'Titian's IL Bravo and George Eliot's Tito: A Painted Record' in *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (September, 1995, pp. 210-217), p. 210.

these fictional paintings in relation to Pater's reading of Renaissance paintings. Pater provides his own impressions on the paintings in his studies of Renaissance art. For Eliot and Pater, painting is an embodiment of one's perception and conception of the external world. Pater's ekphrasis and Eliot's descriptions of visual images in each of their works reconsider this limited delineation in painting. By doing so, the authors attempt to uncover the depth and fluidity of visual images that corresponds to human susceptibility. The pair see portraits incorporating the idea of the transition of humanity.

'Leonardo da Vinci' and 'The School of Giorgione'

Pater views the work of Leonardo da Vinci as the interweaving of singularity, multi-dimensionality, and mobility. For Pater, Leonardo himself is an ideal figure since he demonstrated many talents as an artist, scientist, inventor and musician. Pater associates Leonardo's curiosity for science, in "seeking in an instant of vision to concentrate a thousand experiences"[302] with his visual representations. Moreover, Leonardo was known to leave his works incomplete, and his *Mona Lisa* is one of those. Pater was also fascinated by the blurred historical sense in Leonardo's oeuvre and by the incomplete image that may be viewed as being in the process of construction, and

[302] *SHR*, p. 60.

thus continuing to renew its meaning as human history changes. [303]

Pater's description of the *Mona Lisa* as "the vampire" conveys the point that the image has sucked up the blood of old ideas and representations of the past. In the figure of the Mona Lisa, all the blended essences are distilled into an intensified single presence of the woman. Interestingly, Eliot's Orthodox Jewish character, Mordecai, in *Daniel Deronda,* uses the metaphor of vampirism in order to describe the movement of Jewish assimilation. In the scene of the philosophy club, Mordecai criticises the assimilated modern Jews in the following way:

> What is the citizenship of him who walks among a people he has no hearty kindred and fellowship with, and has lost the sense of brotherhood with his own race? It is a charter of selfish ambition and rivalry in low greed. He is an alien in spirit, whatever he may be in from; he sucks the blood of mankind, he is not a man. [304]

An assimilated Jew, according to Mordecai who believes in Jewish nationalism, is "an alien in spirit" who "sucks the blood of mankind," in other words a vampire. He argues that to lose the sense of brotherhood among Jews and attachment to Jewish history gives rise to selfish ambition and rivalry. Mordecai warns that the future of Jews will be spiritually rootless and formless with such detachment and indifference. Unlike Mordecai's view, however, Pater regards the vampire essence of the *Mona Lisa* as the ideal form of interfusion, assimilating all the spirituality, aesthetics and desires of different religions and philosophies of the past into a harmonious single form:

> All the thoughts and experience of the world have etched and moulded there in

[303] Observations on Leonardo da Vinci continued to be significant into the twentieth century, as Sigmund Freud gave his psychoanalysis observation on this figure in his essay entitled 'Leonardo da Vinci and A Memory of His Childhood' (1910).
[304] *DD*, p. 528.

> that which they have of power to refine and make expressive the outward form, the animalism of Greece, the lust of Rome, the reverie of the middle age with its spiritual ambition and imaginative loves, the return of the Pagan world, the sins of the Borgias, She is older than the rocks among which she sits; like the vampire, she has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave; and has been a diver in deep seas, and keeps their fallen day about her; and trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants; and, as Leda, was the mother of Helen of Troy, and, as Saint Anne, the mother of Mary; and all this has been to her but as the sound of lyres and flutes, and lives only in the delicacy with which it has moulded the changing lineaments and tinged the eyelids and the hands. The fancy of a perpetual life, sweeping together ten thousand experiences, is an old one; and modern thought has conceived the idea of humanity as wrought upon by, and summing up in itself, all modes of thought and life.[305]

Pater views the unification of the multidimensional facets of different religious, philosophical, and poetical feelings in the distinctive single female figure of the Mona Lisa. The figure of woman, Pater says, has been dead many times, but, simultaneously, she continues to renew herself, while sucking up all the fragments of worship from people; she simultaneously transforms herself into a spiritual object of Pagan culture as Leda and of Christian culture as Saint Anne. Pater again uses the metaphor of the web to describe the Mona Lisa as having been "trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants." Like the web for which she had been exchanged, Leonardo's painting is woven with many threads of ideas. Whereas Eliot's Mordecai voices the significance of the sense of belonging to a historical or cultural heritage, Pater's Mona Lisa shows indifference to such elements, instead consuming their historical and religious essences. For the Mona Lisa, all thoughts and experiences of the world become merely "the sound of lyres and flutes." As I will discuss in relation to Pater's treatment of it, music, for the Mona Lisa, is a momentary aesthetic pleasure that continuously renews its aesthetic.

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[305] *SHR*, pp. 70-71.

Simeon Solomon mentions Pater's 'Leonardo da Vinci' in a letter to Swinburne of November 1869: "I want to know what you think of Pater's article in the Fortnightly. I like much of it immensely, but I think it unequal, the description of Mona Lisa is delightful—I went to see him at Oxford a little time since."[306] Then in the same month, Swinburne writes to D. G. Rossetti: "I liked Pater's article on Leonardo very much. I confess I did fancy there was a little spice of my style as you say, but much good stuff of his own and much of interest."[307] Solomon and Swinburne appreciate Pater's writing, especially the former who conveys the essence of Pater's Mona Lisa's in his painting *Bacchus* (1867)[Fig. 11]. The ambiguity of this painting has often been discussed in relation to its androgynous appearance and homoeroticism. Certainly, Solomon condenses the worship of beauty to a single male figure. What is unique about this image though is that like Pater's view of the Mona Lisa by Leonardo, Solomon blends elements of Greek paganism, the subject of the work, with modern elements, including the form of a woman depicted in the style of Rossetti. Solomon inter-fuses classical worship of beauty and modern worship. Thus Solomon's *Bacchus* bears a striking resemblance to Rossetti's erotically charged *Bocca Baciata* or *Lady Lilith*.[308] As we have found, Rossetti established the image of the object of worship in the secular world through provocative images of female physicality including long and thick necks, long hands, and sensuous lips. Solomon's *Bacchus* thus renders Rossetti's female forms as the embodiment of the modern cult of sensuous beauty by emphasising his figure's thick neck, provocative lips and beautiful feminine hand, while the composition resembles Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*. Like Pater's ekphrasis of the Mona

[306] Cecil Y. Lang, ed. *The Swinburne Letters,* Vol. II (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 49.
[307] Lang, *The Swinburne Letters,* Vol. II, p. 58.
[308] Tim Barringer, ed., *Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde*, p. 176.

Lisa, Solomon's *Bacchus* has sucked blood from both the antique male beauty of Bacchus and also the modern beauty of Rossetti's women. Their essences are blended under the skin of a single figure that embodies the fusion of religious spirituality, the cult of physical pleasure in the past and the modern cult of aesthetic life. Pater reiterates the sense of living fluidity and transformability in art: In his essay on 'Coleridge', he puts it in the following way:

> The work of art is likened to a living organism. That expresses truly the sense of a self-delighting, independent life which the finished work of art gives us: it hardly figures the process by which such work was produced. Here there is no blind ferment of lifeless elements towards the realisation of a type. By exquisite analysis the artist attains clearness of idea; then through many stages of refining, clearness of expression. He moves slowly over his work, calculating the tenderest tone, and restraining the subtlest curve, never letting hand or fancy move at large, gradually enforcing flaccid spaces to the higher degree of expressiveness. [309]

Pater encourages the reader to imagine the fermentation of the art work that occurs under the surface from beginning to completion; while working towards one distinctive type, artists keep renewing their thoughts and expressions. Painters, as Pater implies, walk around their works to calculate "the tenderest tone," thus viewing them from various perspectives. They manipulate their "hand[s] and fanc[ies]," to that which indicates the harmony of their physical and internal movements. For Pater, it is essential for aesthetic life to capture the sense of existence of an invisible "living organism."

[309] *Appreciations*, pp. 80-81.

Fig.11

Simeon Solomon*, Bacchus* (1867), oil, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

In the Conclusion to the *Renaissance*, Pater states that one's physical life is under perpetual motion including "the passage of the blood, the wasting and repairing of the lenses of the eye, the modification of the tissues of brain by every ray light and sound—processes which science reduces to simpler and more elementary forces."[310] Moreover, these unrecognised movements of living bodies are analogous to the "living organisms" in art works. Pater also notes that our inward life is more rapid than those physical movements. However, he notes, "the whole scope of observation is dwarfed to the narrow chamber of the individual mind. Experience, already reduced to a swarm of impressions, is ringed round for each one of us by that thick wall of personality through which no real voice has ever pierced on its way to us . . . "[311] As a recipient of aesthetics, one needs to obliterate the "thick wall of personality" which forms "the narrow chamber of the individual mind." Thus what is significant, and paradoxical in a way, in the blueprint of Pater's subjective life, is that he encourages us to obliterate our narrow chamber of personality while preserving our own subjective chamber. In other words, whereas Pater warns against the narrowness of the individual chamber, he emphasises the development of one's own "mobile" individual, "narrow chambers" that are built and furnished by variable perceptions and experience. This concept is repeated particularly in his 'The School of Giorgione' and in his novel *Marius the Epicurean* (1885).

While, for Pater, Titian's *Concert* was a perfect example to demonstrate his idea of a "mobile" individual chamber of inward life in relation to music, *vide infra*, 'The

[310] *SHR*, p. 119.
[311] Ibid.

School of Giorgione' marks the beginning of individual, autonomous space.[312] Andrew Eastham defines the medium of music as "rootless, cosmopolitan, refusing definition by place."[313] Then he argues that Pater links the mobility of music to the paintings of the school of Giorgione. Pater describes the spatial changes in the history of art in which the space for painting travelled from the wall of church or public space to the private realm.[314] While suggesting Giorgione as "the inventor of genre, of those easily movable pictures which serve neither for uses of devotion, nor of allegorical or historic teaching,"[315] he continues:

> Giorgione detaches [paintings] from the wall. He frames them by the hands of some skillful carver, so that people may move them readily and take with them where they go, as one might a poem in manuscript, or a musical instrument, to be used, at will, as a means of self-education, stimulus or solace, coming like an animated presence, into one's cabinet, to enrich the air as with some choice aroma, and like persons, live with us, for a day or a lifetime.[316]

For Pater, from the time of Giorgione paintings came to be nearer to individuals' private rooms. His description of walls decorated with paintings resonates with "the thick wall of personality" in his conclusion. The painting is historically detached from walls on which it had a specific and public purpose to different walls for the purpose of individual pleasure. Unlike the paintings on public walls as paintings came into private hands or to individuals' cabinets offering "self-education", there were able to develop a personal and more intimate relationship with their works by "enrich[ing] the air with

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[312] Pater misattributes *Concert* to Giorgione.
[313] Andrew Eastham, 'Walter Pater's Acoustic Space: "The School of Giorgione", Dionysian "Anders-streben", and the Politics of Soundscape' in *The Yearbook of English Studies*, Vol. 40, No. ½ (2010, pp. 196-216), p. 200.
[314] Ibid., p. 201.
[315] Ibid., p. 128.
[316] Ibid.

some choice aroma." Pater denotes the hint of sensuousness in this "aroma," further noting that the paintings are "like persons" and "live with us" highlighting a sense of personal attachment.

Paintings in *Romola*

Eliot's references to painting are significant in *Romola*. Alison Byerly argues that Eliot employs paintings and theatre to demonstrate the delusion of human perception.[317] However, in *Romola*, certain paintings correspond to or generate a realisation in Romola's life. In fact, aesthetic and spiritual visions in *Romola* blur the boundary between reality and illusion, and the empirical and the metaphysical. In the novel, Eliot illustrates the transformation of the impression of visual images as the heroine undergoes the transformation to her new ethical sense. Eliot makes visual images a part of the formation of life and visual descriptions that are prevalent in the novel along with paintings, play a significant role in unveiling human nature, especially in the revelation of the real face of Tito. Yet, just as Pater describes the image of the Mona Lisa as not a "pictorial realisation" but "the starting-point of a train of sentiment," Eliot's conveyance of visual images signifies the starting point of the heroine's sentiments.

The distinctively beautiful appearance of Tito embodies the form of Hellenistic physical worship, and it draws Romola's attention. Tito is often described as "bright"

[317] Alison Byerly, *Realism, Representation, and the Arts in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), p. 109.

and such brightness makes Romola believe in his inner goodness. In doing so, Romola becomes a passive viewer in the novel. She especially views Tito as if he were a completed painting. However, her impression of him becomes unstable as she views different portrayals of Tito in visions and visual images. Firstly, she views him through the spiritual and prophetic vision of her converted brother; second and third images are produced by a painter Piero di Cosimo: one is Tito as Bacchus and the other is Tito with a frightened expression in an allegorical setting. All these visual images become supplements for her to help to see underneath the surface of Tito.

Romola does not believe in the first Christian vision of her brother Dino, in which a man with a blank face leads her to a priest with a face of death and they marry, and her father, who is also present, dies shortly after. (Chap 15) Although, for Romola, these Christian images are nothing but a delusion and fantasy, they haunt her mind. This shadowy and abstract delineation of the figure of Tito parallels a casket with an image of Bacchus and Ariadne gifted to Romola by Tito. This painting demonstrates a concrete and detailed image. Romola's expectation in marital life with Tito is then symbolically and visually completed in the form of this image that commemorates and celebrates their wedding. Tito asks the painter Piero de Cosimo to paint the image of the triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne in the form of a triptych. Tito explains his idea of the composition in the following way:

> 'The young Bacchus must be seated in a ship, his head bound with clusters of grapes, and a spear entwined with vine-leaves in his hand: dark-berried ivy must wind about the masts and sails, the oars must be thyrsi, and flowers must wreathe themselves about the poop; leopards and tigers must be crouching before him, and dolphins must be sporting round. But I want to have the fair-

> haired Ariadne with him, made immortal with her golden crown—that is not in Ovid's story, but no matter, you will conceive it all—and above there must be young Loves, such as you know how to paint, shooting with roses at the points of their arrows—'[318]

Tito subjectively interprets the story of Ovid, and personalises it with his idealised vision of young lovers. In other words, this is his pictorial interpretation of the language of Ovid, and the story is limited to the single interpretation of Tito's singular perspective. As Jennifer Uglow suggests, this image of Bacchus connotes two stories of which: "Bacchus avenges himself on the pirates who have kidnapped him by making ivy and vines grow over their rigging, and the other where he rescues Ariadne on the isle of Naxos."[319] What is also significant about this image is that Eliot lets Tito verbally describe it, instead of having the third person narrator describe it from a neutral point of view. Thus the reader can only access the image through Tito's subjective verbal descriptions. Shawn Malley has considered the relationship between verbal and visual representations as a central issue for Eliot in the novel, and he gives the following explanation of the image: "his orchestration of the composition in fact symbolises his manipulation of her affection."[320] Tito's verbal composition of the image especially centres on the detailed description of Bacchus and reflects his self-centred and narcissistic nature. On revealing the image to Romola, Tito explains that:

> "the ship on the calm sea, and the ivy that never withers, and those Loves that have left off wounding us and shower soft petals that are like our kisses; and

[318] *R*, p. 183-4.
[319] Uglow, *George Eliot*, p. 166.
[320] Shawn Malley, ' "The listening look": Visual and Verbal Metaphor in Frederic Leighton's illustrations to George Eliot's Romola', in *Nineteenth-Century Contexts: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (1996, pp. 259-284), p. 261.

> the leopards and tigers; they are trouble of your life that are all quelled now; and the strange sea-monsters, with their merry eyes—let us see—they are the dull passage in the heavy book." [321]

Through symbolism, Tito simplifies the meaning of life into a simple form; becalmed leopards and tigers symbolise Romola's supposedly quelled troubles in life. This mirrors his superficial and single perspective that prioritises pleasure while eliminating troubles. As Malley points out, Tito "masks the truth by persuading people of the verity of surfaces."[322] Although this visual image shows a concrete form, it is limited by a static temporality and Tito's own epicurean point of view.

However, as Romola's doubt about Tito increases, the interpretation of the painting of Bacchus and Ariadne alters. Tito, being occupied with his public role, neglects to visit Romola's father to help his study. Romola starts feeling disappointed about the reality of their married life, and this is compared with the painting: "the crowned Ariadne, under the snowing roses, had felt more and more the presence of unexpected thorns."[323] In the painting, Romola notices that the shower of roses which symbolises the kisses of Ariadne and Bacchus, in fact, bear the thorns that are stabbing her, thus the image of the rose indicates a new interpretation of her life as subject to unexpected trouble. After learning that Tito has sold her father's library without her consent, Romola attempts to leave him for first time. Then she views the painting differently. It reveals how easily she has been moved by Tito's shallow image and the

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[321] *R*, p. 198.
[322] Malley, '"The listening look": Visual and verbal metaphor in Frederic Leighton's illustrations to George Eliot's Romola' in *Nineteenth-Century Contexts: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, p. 261.
[323] *R*, p. 243.

narrator voices Romola's emotion in the words "Foolish Ariadne."[324] In so doing, Eliot delineates the protagonist's emotional transition as corresponding with the viewing of the painting. The narrator says: "Romola looked at the familiar images with the new bitterness and repulsion: they seemed a more pitiable mockery than ever on this chill morning, when she had waked to wander in loneliness."[325] Although the painting never transforms itself, her emotional attachment to the image and its meaning undergoes a metamorphosis. The allegory of happiness and joy becomes the image of its opposite, mockingly uncovering her unhappiness.

Romola's realisation of the misery of her marital life mingles with the other image, that of the first Christian vision of her brother Dino. As the image of Ariadne and Bacchus fades, the vision of the phantom, for Romola, forms more concrete outlines. Romola finds it difficult to reconcile the abstract and irrational Christian visions and the concrete image of Tito. While Romola assumes that her married life had been full of concrete and bright images, in fact her assumption has made her irrational and Eliot alludes to a double-sidedness of human life by juxtaposing the two different visual images. Romola does not reconcile these two opposing images; Tito's brightness and Dino's dying face, and she questions, " [w]hat thought could reconcile that worn anguish in her brother's face–that straining after something invisible—with this satisfied strength and beauty, and make it intelligible that they belonged to the same world?"[326] The rationale Romola believes in, which is her husband's visible image symbolised in the painting of Ariadne, is a delusion. On the other hand, the invisible religious prophecy which she regards as a shadowy delusion becomes closer to her

[324] Ibid.
[325] Ibid.
[326] Ibid., p. 177-8.

reality. Although Romola still denies a possibility of being guided by that "sickly superstition," she starts imagining the perspective of those who believe in it: "But persistent presence of these memories, linking themselves in her imagination with her actual lot, gave her a glimpse of her understanding into the lives which had before lain utterly aloof from her sympathy—the lives of the men and women who were led by such inward images and voices".[327] This is the moment when Romola starts considering the effect of Christianity, and this subtle transition with her inner world is charted by the juxtaposition of the different visual images.

Double-sidedness is eminently apparent in the visual delineation of Tito, especially his portrait by Piero di Cosimo. The role of an actual painter, Piero di Cosimo, has drawn scholars' attention, and William J. Sullivan observes that the painter distils the novelist's conception of aesthetics, morality and philosophy.[328] On the other hand, David J. DeLaura argues that Piero can be associated with the dogma of art for art's sake, and especially the doctrine of Pater. He attempts to link Piero's quote that "only passionate life is in form and colour"[329] to the views of Pater in his writing.[330]

Indeed, the view of Piero is detached from society. The painter was initially planning to paint Tito as a traitor in his painting, but a barber, Nello, makes fun of his perception and recommends the image of Tito as Saint Sebastian or Bacchus. The painter does not apply Tito's beauty in the traditional formula of a Christian saint or

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[327] *R*, p. 324.
[328] Sullivan, 'Piero di Cosimo and the Higher Primitivism in Romola' in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*
[329] *R*, p. 88.
[330] DeLaura, 'Romola and the Origin of the Paterian View of Life' in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (December, 1966), pp. 225-233. Hill, 'Pater's Debt to Romola' in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (March, 1968), pp. 361-377.

Greek god. His imagination is rooted in his greater knowledge and perspective on human nature instead of the prevalent Christian and Greek iconographies. Thus he is not a painter who merely observes the surface of human nature but he is also capable of imagining uncertain or shadowed nature underneath the form of human figures.[331] He describes Tito as having: "…a face that would make him the more perfect traitor if he had the heart of one, … which informed with rich young blood, that will be nourished enough by food, and keep its colour without much help of virtue."[332] Piero often refers to colour, but his attention to colour does not suggest his aesthetic preference. Rather it indicates his curiosity about the wide range of colours of individuals that are changeable by the angle of light or shade. His painting thus uncovers what is hidden underneath the human form.

Piero becomes a significant witness as Tito happens to come across his father, Baldassarre, whom the son had abandoned and left a prisoner. As Sullivan remarks, Piero is the only person who witnesses Tito's fearful face in person.[333] The painter finds a mysterious attraction to Baldassarre, perceiving something peculiar but untranslatable, and in time him he decides to paint him as a ghost. The startled expression on Tito's face gives the painter a special impression too, as he questions later "[w]hat colour do you think a man's liver is, who looks like a bleached deer as soon as a chance stranger lays hold of him suddenly?"[334] The painter portrays Tito full of the expression of terror next to Baldassarre as a ghost. When Romola finds the

[331] Malley, ' "The listening look": Visual and verbal metaphor in Frederic Leighton's illustrations to George Eliot's Romola' in *Nineteenth-Century Contexts: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, p. 260.
[332] *R*, p. 42.
[333] Sullivan, 'Piero di Cosimo and the Higher Primitivism in Romola' in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, p. 403.
[334] *R*, p. 258-9.

painting at his studio, Piero explains that "I wanted a handsome young face for it."[335] Here, his painting significantly parallels the two visions Romola experienced: Piero's painting can reconcile the two opposing images, the ghostly, shadowy image, and, the bright image of Tito, yet his visage is transformed into a frightened expression. On the other hand, Romola cannot reconcile the shadowy vision by Dino and the image of Tito, because, she believes they do not fuse together. Moreover, this painted record is found after she discovers the fact that Tito wears chain-armour underneath his clothes, which raises her anxiety about his life. Tito with the chain-armour and the image of his frightened face again, for Romola, cannot be woven together: "She could not help putting together the two facts of the chain-armour and the encounter mentioned by Piero between her husband and the prisoner."[336] All of the different pieces from the visual images of Tito gradually become one thread and unveil his true nature for the reader and Romola. The multi-dimensional elements of a human being are reflected in this static image.

In *Romola*, different visions and paintings are gradually assimilated and provide the heroine with different points of view. Moreover, these static paintings arouse the emotional movement of Romola. Piero's paintings in the novel are linked to Pater's view of the Mona Lisa culminating in a mélange of different elements. Eliot uses visual images, including a spiritual vision and paintings, to parallel the transition of Romola's inner world.

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[335] *R*, p. 255.
[336] Ibid., p. 257.

Music

Both Eliot and Pater employ the medium of music in significant ways. In this final section, I examine the implications of music in *Romola,* by considering Pater's view on music in 'The School of Giorgione' and contemporary paintings by Solomon. Of all the media of art, music allows the freedom of expression least contaminated with conventional representations, and is thus more likely to connect directly to one's inner consciousness and emotion. Eliot and Pater then acknowledge this advantage of the medium. Indeed, music is one of the most essential elements in the visual arts from the nineteenth century, especially from Aestheticism to Modernism. In particular, Pater's most well-known phrase in 'the School of Giorgione' that "[a]ll art constantly aspires towards the condition of music"[337] has often been associated with the inspiration for and inception of these prominent movements. Indeed, after the 1860s, one can see a substantial number of paintings emerge that deal with themes of music, including works by James Abbott McNeill Whistler, Frederic Leighton, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Albert Moore, and Simeon Solomon.

By interrogating the vital formation of music, Pater reiterates his conception of ideal individualism. Eliot also actively employs music in her work. Indeed, elements of music are as essential as those of the visual arts in her novels. As the research of Beryl Gray and Deila da Sousa Correa has highlighted the novelist often attended music concerts and enjoyed friendships with prominent musicians of the time including

[337] *SHR*, p. 124.

Wagner and Liszt.[338] Gray and da Sousa Correa observe that Eliot's accumulated musical experiences as a listener are explicitly reflected in her description of musical scenes and her description of the musician character Julius Klesmer in *Daniel Deronda*.[339] Of all the substantial allusions to music in her writings, I focus on a musical effect of human susceptibility delineated in *Romola*. Direct reference to music is less obvious in this novel than in Eliot's other novels such as *The Mill on the Floss* and *Daniel Deronda*, which have been dealt with by the two aforementioned scholars. And I will compare the conception of musical effects in *Romola* with Pater's reference to musical paintings in 'The School of Giorgione.' My concern is the shared way in which Pater and Eliot see the principal effect of music on human susceptibility.

In the essay on Giorgione, Pater particularly admires the sense of absorption in the paintings of *The Concert* in the *Pitti* Palace and the *Fête Champêtre*, which, he observes, denote the unification of feeling and thoughts and "the consummate moment."[340] On the other hand, Eliot describes the influence of music in emphasising the emotional transition of Romola especially while under the influence of Savonarola. Pater focuses on individual moments of music culminating in the sensation of absorption and faintness suggesting the unification of feeling and thought, whereas Eliot focuses on the effect of music that gives a passive sense of comradeship, and provides Romola with a sense of the unification of herself and the external world.

In his reconsideration of subjective life in relation to the medium of music, Pater

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[338] Beryl Gray, *George Eliot and Music* (London: Macmillan, 1989): Deila da Sousa Correa, *George Eliot, Music and Victorian Culture* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

[339] Deila da Sousa Correa suggests that Klesmer is modelled by actual musician Anton Rubinstein, introduced Eliot by her friend Liszt. *George Eliot, Music and Victorian Culture,* p. 132.

[340] Lee Mckay Johnson notes Pater's idea; conception of "the fusion of physical existence with spiritual life." Lee Mckay Johnson, *The Metaphor of Painting: Essays on Baudelaire, Ruskin, Proust, and Pater* (Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1980), p. 198.

encourages the reader to obliterate that which hinders the freedom of individual feeling. The expressions of one's feeling, the "untranslatable feeling" and "peculiar feeling," which are generated from individual aesthetic experiences, are filtered and defined through each of one's limited thoughts and knowledge. Pater emphasises the priority of being receptive to one's own feeling and sensations without any applying any definition. He admires the ecstatic sensation that music provides, and he aesthetises such uncontrollable ecstasies. Jeffery Wallen suggests that writers of the nineteenth century including Pater, Charles Dickens, William Wilkie Collins, William Thackeray, Elizabeth Barrett, and Robert Browning showed a great interest in the influence of mesmerism.[341] Wallen notes that towards the end of the nineteenth century, people regarded the influence of art as dangerous and associated it with degeneracy.[342] In particular, susceptibility to music was compared with the hypnotic effect, engendering loss of control of thought.[343] Pater was also concerned with the power of art to produce such effects, yet in his 'Leonardo da Vinci' he associates hypnotic sensations to feelings that are liberated:

> Nervous, electric, faint always with some inexplicable faintness, they seem to be subject to exceptional conditions, to feel powers at work in the common air unfelt by others, become, as it were, receptacles of them, and pass them on to us in a chain of secret influences.[344]

For Pater, subordination to untranslatable sensations such as fainting becomes an

[341] Jeffery Wallen, 'Physiology, Mesmerism, and Walter Pater's "Susceptibilities to Influence"' in Laurel Brake, Lesley Higgins, and Carolyn Williams, eds., *Walter Pater: Transparencies of Desire* (Greensboro: University of North Caroline ELT Press, 2002, pp. 73-89), p. 78.
[342] Ibid., p. 75.
[343] Ibid., p. 76.
[344] *SHR*, p. 66.

exclusively private experience, and it creates sensuous autonomy. He specifically assesses the absorption and fainting sensation in 'The School of Giorgione' in relation to music. In describing the painting, *The Concert* in the *Pitti* Palace by Titian, Pater especially focuses on the central figure of the monk in the following way:

> . . . a monk, with cowl and tonsure, touches the keys of a harpsichord, while a clerk, placed behind him, grasps the handle of a viol, and a third, with cap and plume, seems to wait upon the true interval for the beginning to sing, is undoubtedly Giorgione's. The outline of the lifted finger, the trace of the plume, the very threads of the fine linen, which fasten themselves on the memory, in the moment before they are lost altogether in that calm unearthly glow, the skill which has caught the waves of wandering sound, and fixed them for ever on the lips and hands . . . [345]

Andrew Eastham observes that Pater highlights the moment before the fainting of the monk who is striving into musical space, and thus the absorption of the monk is the central effect in the painting.[346] Moreover, the monk is represented not only as a player of music but also as a listener.[347] This absorption as player and listener indicates self-sufficiency, thus the figure achieves his autonomic space. The intensity of his interior world towards "the moment before they are lost altogether in that calm unearthly glow" is implicitly rendered through his gaze and the strain in his fingers in the painting. As Eastham points out, the gazes of each of the three figures are manipulated and differently directed; they are individually located and waiting for their own part to join the creation of music, but culminate in a "communal consciousness." [348] Although they are absorbed in their own moments, they become

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[345] *SHR*, p. 130.
[346] Eastham, 'Walter Pater's Acoustic Space: "The School of Giorgione", Dionysian "Anders-streben", and the Politics of Soundscape' in *The Yearbook of English Studies,* p. 204.
[347] Ibid., p. 205.
[348] Ibid., p. 204.

spontaneously harmonised.

Pater in the later part of 'The School of Giorgione' states that:

> . . . life itself is conceived as a sort of listening—listening to music, to the reading of Bandello's novels, to the sound of water, to time as it flies. Often such moments are really our moments of play, and we are surprised at the unexpected blessedness of what may seem our least important part of times, . . . the stress of our servile, everyday attentiveness being relaxed, the happier powers in things without are permitted free passage, and have their way with us. [349]

The moment of listening, a passive absorbed condition, which liberates out daily duty, for Pater, is "our moment of play." The painter Solomon, evokes what Pater writes above in his painting *A Prelude by Bach* (1868) which depicts the act of listening. Also his piece *A Young Musician Employed in the Temple Service During the Feast of Tabernacles* (1861) focuses on the player's facial expressions as he intensely listens to the music he plays, and *A Youth Relating Tales to Ladies* (1870) also delineates listening faces, which are similarly absorbed in hearing a story. In *A Prelude by Bach*, [Fig. 12] a female figure who plays the piano is situated in a central position. However, it seems that her presence is not the central subject of this picture. Despite the fact that she plays the piano, her posture is awkwardly rigid and her facial expression and the colour of her costume are blunt and lack personality. The other listeners scattered everywhere do not comprise a harmonious visual composition.[350] They are absorbed in their contemplation, and Solomon aestheticises their individual and sensuous moments. A male figure, in particular, though seemingly sleeping, can be interpreted

[349] *SHR*, p. 134.
[350] Cruise, 'Critical Connections and Quotational Strategies: Allegory and Aestheticism in Pater and Simeon Solomon' in *Victorian Aesthetic Conditions and Pater Across Art*, p. 73.

as being absorbed in the music and experiencing a fainting sensation. Moreover, the colour combination in this painting is significant: Solomon suggestively repeats the colour pairings of blue and orange, and purple and yellow, which are complementary pairs in the colour circle. For example, the young boy on the very left wears an orange costume with a blue sash like a ribbon. In the couple next to him, the man wears a purple shirt with a yellowish ribbon and the woman wears a yellowish dress; behind them, a female figure wears a purple dress with a yellow ribbon; the blue dress of the woman sitting on the chair on the left by comparison becomes a vivid contrast to the orange dress of the female figure behind. The presentation of each opposing colour pairing, blue and orange, and, purple and yellow, creates a striking aesthetic colour harmony. There is no narrative but it is the very representation of listening and absorbing states and the aesthetics of the colour combinations that please our eyes. As with Pater's ideas on music, Solomon's musical painting does not require any attentiveness or knowledge in order to appreciate it.

Fig.12

Simeon Solomon, *A Prelude by Bach* (1868), watercolour, Private Collection.

Music in *Romola*

Like Pater, Eliot is aware that music influences individuals emotionally and sensuously. In 1855, she enjoyed social gatherings involving musicians, and on occasion listened to Liszt playing the piano. She chose to sit close to him, in order to intensely observe the musician. In her journal, she records in detail how Liszt played rather than commenting on his music itself.[351] In her essay 'Wagner, Liszt, and Weimar,' Eliot introduces the portrait of Liszt, *Three Magi*, painted by Ary Scheffer, and describes his appearance thus: "with head thrown back and nostril dilated, he suggests a prophet in the moment of inspiration: and then again, seated placidly silent amidst a group of gay talkers,….a young man in the likeness of Liszt—who is gazing in ecstasy at the guiding light above them."[352] The face of Liszt in the portrait looks up, staring at the light in the sky as if searching for inspiration for his music. Liszt is portrayed as if he is a saint who will deliver some spiritual message to his audience. As Eliot describes it, his intense face in ecstasy represents both the act of listening for aesthetic inspiration and his physical production of music. He intensely listens to sacred sounds and voices and sublimates them into his creation. This image of the musician as a spiritual and influential messenger parallels Eliot's figure of Savonarola.

Eliot's view of musical effects is manifest in the spiritual relationship between Romola and Savonarola. Byerly observes that in the novel "[m]usic, for Eliot, [is] capable of mirroring human emotions" and becomes "the 'true' portrayal of a person's

[351] Her experience of staying in Germany including her socializing with the prominent musicians of the time is recorded in her journal 'Recollection of Weimar' and the extended version of the articles 'Three months in Weimer' and 'Liszt, Wagner, and Weimar' published in the *Fraser's Magazine* on June and July 1855.
[352] *Essays*, p. 98.

inner self"; thus "[m]usic becomes the medium through which Eliot's characters communicate their most intangible feelings."[353] Romola, as a passive listener, seeks her moral inspiration while listening to the voice of Savonarola. She is susceptible to his voice and feels vibrating sensations from it, as he delivers a message or prophesy from God. Eliot describes an example of Savonarola's preaching inside the Dome in the following way:

> . . . Savonarola had stretched out his arms and lifted up his eyes to heaven; his strong voice had alternately trembled with emotion and risen again in renewed energy; but the passion with which he offered himself as a victim became at last too strong to allow of further speech, and he ended in a sob. Every changing tone, vibrating through the audience, shocks them into answering emotion.[354]

His emotionally charged gestures, stretching his arms, lifting his eyes to the sky, and sobbing, can be seen to resemble an operatic or theatrical performance. His emotional and changing tone of voice spontaneously produces musical sounds, penetrating the emotions of the audience and engendering their sympathy. Thus Savonarola's speech is developed into a form of music. The idea of the evolution of music from language is discussed by da Sousa Correa, who suggests that Eliot's view on music is influenced by that of Herbert Spencer.[355] Spencer's article 'The Origin of Function of Music' in *Fraser's Magazine* of 1857 notes that music evolves from emotionally charged speech.[356] Eliot implies this process in the quoted scene above. In order for Savonarola's speech to achieve its musical effect, there is a unification of emotion and passion as he produces his voice.

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[353] Byerly, *Realism, Representation, and the Arts in Nineteenth-Century Literature*, p. 134; p. 139.
[354] *R*, p. 229.
[355] Delia da Sousa Correa, *George Eliot: Music and Victorian Culture.*
[356] Ibid., pp. 12-21.

Meanwhile, among the audience, Romola is one of those who experiences an emotional stir.

> But when she heard Savonarola invoke martyrdom, she sobbed with the rest: she felt herself penetrated with a new sensation—a strange sympathy with something apart from all the definable interests of her life. It was not altogether unlike the thrill which had accompanied certain rare heroic touches in history and poetry; but the resemblance was as that between the memory of music, and the sense of being possessed by actual vibrating harmonies.[357]

Romola's new aspiration is likened to the thrill of the memory of vibrating harmonies. From Savonarola's powerful voice, Romola feels "a new sensation" and regains a sense of comradeship that can replace that lost from the breaking of her bond with Tito. What Tito gives her when they meet for the first time is a sense of comradeship. However, later there is no comradeship as he is often absent from her. The voice of Savonarola reminds her of the sense of her existence through membership of a society. Romola's sense of comradeship provided by music was also experienced by Eliot herself. In 1858, she reveals in a letter to Sara Hennell that she heard the organ and choir at the Frauenkirche at Munich and she felt it creating "a feeling of brotherhood …"[358]

By comparing Savonarola's preaching to music, Eliot also highlights the extent to which it brings listeners comfortable passivity and hypnotises them. Eliot hints at the mechanism of the powerful influence of Savonarola when people start to doubt the credibility of his spiritual word, namely his claims of being a prophet and the miracle of God he describes: "As long as the belief in the prophet carried no threat of outward

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[357] *R*, p. 247.
[358] Cited in Delia da Sousa Correa, *George Eliot: Music and Victorian Culture*, p. 176.

calamity, but rather the confident hope of exceptional safety, no sign was needed: but his preaching was a music to which people felt themselves marching along the way they wished to go."[359] Eliot implies a numbness of the mass that just marches along with the music Savonarola plays. Romola was part of in this marching group with her new creed of renunciation. In her time under the influence of Savonarola, she becomes absorbed in the effect of his voice. She finds her contribution in eliminating her individual pleasure and caring for others, and Savonarola's voice provides her with the sense that she is united with others.

However, when she seeks help from Savonarola, after her godfather is condemned as a traitor, Romola fails to find humanity in him. While Savonarola is concerned with God's kingdom instead of the suffering of an individual life, Romola condemns him saying that "I cannot hear the real voice of your judgment and conscience."[360] The narrator also discredits Savonarola in this interaction, saying "she heard only the ring of egoism."[361] Here Romola realises that the voice of Savonarola is not one of harmonious music anymore. Instead it becomes merely a single tune of an egoistic "ring." His musical preaching conceals his real voice but idealise it with a mixture of his passion and emotion. Romola detects this at the occasion of her personal meeting with Savonarola. In this personal meeting with the priest, his voice does not give her a sense of brotherhood, instead she recognises that his voice is embellished by its musicality.

Pater and Eliot recognise a similar effect of music, yet employ it in different ways.

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[359] *R*, p. 506.
[360] Ibid., p. 491.
[361] Ibid., p. 501.

Pater emphasises the autonomy music provides in creating an absorbed sensation, which conveys a moment, consuming the time of individuals and liberating them from ordinary life. This liberates us from our ordinary life. The portrayal of aestheticised absorption in the painting of Solomon corresponds with Pater's idea. For Eliot, on the other hand, in *Romola*, particular musical effects work on absorption that gives a sense of fellowship.

Chapter III

The Image of Sculptural Bodies in George Eliot's *Middlemarch* and Edward Burne-Jones's Paintings

George Eliot, Burne-Jones, and Sculpture

Travelling to Italy in 1860 was a significant experience for George Eliot, and her memory of the continental journey essentially became the inspiration for her novel writing. She frequently used Italy as a significant setting in her later novels, including *Romola, Middlemarch,* and *Daniel Deronda*. Her travels in Italy were substantially documented in her 'Recollections of Italy 1860', as she explains, for the sake of making clear the impressions she gathered there, or more specifically, preserving her impressions of antique art.[362] One of her major aims in travelling to Italy was to enjoy the ancient and classical art and sculpture there. While visiting almost all of the major cities, including Florence, Genoa, Rome, Naples, Bologna, Venice, and Milan over a period of three months, Eliot viewed celebrated ancient sculptures at the nation's famous galleries including the Vatican and the Uffizi gallery.[363] Thus, her journal reads

[362] *The Journals*, p. 336.
[363] Eliot's journal records that: "the Apollo, the Dying Gladiator and the Lateran Antinous"; "the Venus of the Capital, and Kissing Children in the same room; the Sophocles, at the Lateran

like a catalogue of ancient and classical art or the essays of an art critic. Her comments were both outspoken and observant. For example, she criticises the *Antinous* at the Villa Albani as "the least beautiful of all the representations of that sad loveliness that I have seen – be it said, in spite of Winckelmann: attitude and face are strongly Egyptian."[364] When she mentions the name of Johan Joachim Winckelmann, one can be almost certain that she had read Winckelmann's books, but apparently she did not express any strong deference to them. However, in spite of her criticism of the sculpture that Winckelmann admired, Eliot's comments implicitly indicate her knowledge of his writing, as she is spontaneously able to compare her own impressions of the sculpture *Antinous* with those of Winckelmann's.

Eliot may have read Winckelmann's work *History of the Art of Antiquity* earlier than other British people did. During her visit to Germany with Lewes in the 1850s, it is believed that Eliot read a number of books of German philosophy and aesthetic writings including those of Winckelmann and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing.[365] Winckelmann's *History of the Art of Antiquity* was first published in 1764. In Britain, the English version had been hard to obtain, and it only became fully available in 1873, about ninety years after its initial publication.[366] Eliot, however, adheres to Lessing's writing on sculpture rather than Winckelmann's.[367] Her favouring of Lessing who criticises the aesthetic observations of Winckelmann, has naturally been translated

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Museum; the Neil; the black laughing Centaur at the Capital; the Laughing Faun; in the Vatican the Sauroktonos, or boy with the lizard; and the sitting statue called Menander"; "Old faun with Infant Bacchus" and "The Faun of Praxiteles." *The Journals*, pp. 343-344.

[364] Ibid., p. 347.

[365] Avrom Fleishiman lists a number of books Eliot read during her stay in Germany and Winckelmann's *History of Ancient Art* is included in this list. *George Eliot's Intellectual Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010), P. 75.

[366] Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1994), p. 240.

[367] Witemeyer, *George Eliot and the Visual Arts*, p. 35.

into her disagreement with the latter. Yet, none of these studies have substantially proved the extent to which Eliot disagrees with Winckelmann. [368]

There was a significant revival of interest in the work of Winckelmann as well as Greek sculpture as a whole in the nineteenth century. As the previous chapter has shown, it was Walter Pater in particular who held high regard for the way in which Winckelmann sensuously observed sculpture. Pater was particularly drawn to Winckelmann's free style of historical writing about art, especially his subjective and homoerotic views on the male sculptural body. There is a strong resonance between the manner of the two critics not only in Pater's essay 'Winckelmann' in *Studies in the History of the Renaissance,* but also in the way in which Pater revives the Renaissance by emphasising subjective and homoerotic implications together with a hint of psychological depth.[369] In fact, Pater was not alone at the time in reconsidering the merits of antique sculpture. Many nineteenth century artists attempted to reconfigure this embodiment of absolute beauty. For Victorians, Greek sculpture represented a universal value: The perfect and harmonious forms embodied the affinity of the aesthetic and ethical including beauty, ideality, reason, morality, and the flourishing of society.[370] Thus, these concrete material forms in marble literally sustained hard, unbreakable and immortal values. While taking inspiration from Greek sculpture, nineteenth century sculptors attempted to reconfigure their forms and ideas: As Alicia Faxon implies, mythology or sculpture, which achieves absolute beauty becomes a

[368] For example, Witemeyer maintains that "[Eliot] strongly disagreed with German neoclassicism in the Winckelmann tradition" but has not explored further this point. *George Eliot and the Visual Arts,* p. 24.
[369] Potts, *The Flesh and the Ideal*, p. 240.
[370] Martina Droth, 'Antiquity and the Ideal' in Martina Droth, Jason Edwards, and Michael Hatt, eds., *Victorian Sculpture: Art in an Age of Invention, 1837-1901* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2014, pp. 176-233), p. 176.

"device" to depict the present.[371] However, the expressions or rendering of sculptures are provided with a modern arrangement: The new types of sculpture conveyed elements of the ephemeral, fragile and momentary in the representations in contrast to the immortal ancient sculpture. That is to say, the artists began to endow works with subjective, personal or metaphorical meaning.

Thus the Victorian period experienced a significant sculptural movement called "New Sculpture." This movement eminently reflects the revival of antique sculpture and also the flourishing of the Victorian empire. A sculpture by the President of the Royal Academy of that time, Frederic Lord Leighton,[372] *An Athlete Wrestling with a Python*, exhibited in 1877, became noted as the inception of the movement. This bronze statue created a public sensation. *An Athlete* is often compared with the *Laocoön and His Sons at* the Vatican which Winckelmann had greatly admired in his essay. While Leighton mainly focused on painting in his earlier career, his conception of the *Athlete* was, in fact, inspired by one of his paintings called *The Daphnephoria* (1876).[373] This transition from art exhibited in two dimensional space to three dimensionality is particularly intriguing. Indeed, sculptural representations were also increasingly delineated on canvases. The iconic tales and metaphors from Greek mythology, such as those of Venus, Medusa, Apollo, and Pygmalion, became pervasive visual images across art media as well as in literature. Behind the movement of "New

[371] Alicia Craig Faxon, 'The Pre-Raphaelites and the Mythic Image: Iconographies of Women' in *An International Journal of Documentation,* Vol. 27, No. 1 (2011, pp. 77-89), p. 81.
[372] Leighton drew illustrations for Eliot's *Romola*, and the novelist also asked him for advice about the depictions of Florence. See their correspondence, *Letters*, Vol. III, p. 274; p. 276. Also see the discussions in Witemeyer, *George Eliot and the Visual Arts*; Malley, '"The listening look": Visual and Verbal Metaphor in Frederic Leighton's illustrations to George Eliot's Romola' (pp. 259-284).
[373] David. J Getsy, *Body Doubles: Sculpture in Britain 1877-1905* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2004), p. 17.

Sculpture", there was a considerable reconfiguration of sculpture in painting and writing.

In terms of the sculptural representations depicted in paintings and writings, this chapter focuses on the work of Edward Burne-Jones and that of George Eliot. Like Eliot, Burne-Jones travelled to Italy, which provided a crucial inspiration for him to establish his own art style, especially through the influence of Greek sculpture and the work of Michelangelo. Ancient and Italian Renaissance art influenced Burne-Jones's rendering of the human form including the nude figure. For example, Renaissance artists explored a highly anatomical study of the human body for their artistic creations, and Michelangelo, in particular, is believed to have carried out actual dissections on animals and humans to research their physiological systems.[374] Burne-Jones too was as obsessive when scrutinising the human body, and he left behind a considerable number of his sketches of nude figures. But it was antique sculpture in the British museum that provided him with the inspiration to explore and seek out the ideal form of human figures.[375] Like the art of sculpture, the human body itself, for Burne-Jones, became a central narrative that allowed him to incorporate an elusive form of psychology and philosophy into his art.

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[374] James Hall, *Michelangelo and the Reinvention of Human Body* (London: Pimlico, 2005) p. 74.

[375] As he lived nearby the British Museum, he frequently visited the institution. In a letter to his son Philip, Burne-Jones writes "I worked at my clay figure and finished it as much as I want. But to-day my arm is almost disabled for work. Tomorrow I will rest and go down to the Museum to look at coins and antique things and comfort my heart." He wrote to his son in 1875 that: "I have worked at the British Museum lately looking up all the most ancient ways of pourtraying [sic] Medusa, and I know much more about it than I did, and will tell you about is some day". He also recalls one day, "I know that if there had been one cast from ancient Greek sculpture or one faithful copy of a great Italian picture to be seen in Birmingham when I was a boy, I should have begun to paint ten years before I did." *Memorials*, Vol. II, p.47; p. 58; p. 100.

The friendship between Burne-Jones and George Eliot is substantially recorded. Two years after Burne-Jones started a notorious affair with a young Greek woman, Maria Zambaco, he began a friendship with Eliot and Lewes from 1868. Eliot frequently visited Burne-Jones's studio, and regularly met and corresponded with his wife Georgiana.[376] Eliot greatly admired *Love Among the Ruins* and *The Hesperides*. Burne-Jones, likewise, was enchanted by Eliot's intelligence, saying that "there is no one living better to talk to"; "Her knowledge is really deep, and her heart [is] one of the most sympathetic to me I ever knew."[377] Georgiana in the *Memorials* states that Eliot visited Burne-Jones, and they enjoyed talking about Homer and lost Greek poems in 1879.[378] This record shows that the writer and the painter had shared interests, including a common interest in the antiquity and in particular Greek art and literature. Bearing in mind this correspondence between the tapestries of their intellectual pursuits, this chapter addresses their mutual interests in antique sculpture and examines the ways in which Eliot and Burne-Jones employ images of sculpture in their own creative work. Firstly, I focus on the delineation of the male character by Eliot in *Middlemarch* in relation to sculpture, while also considering the observations on male sculpture by Winckelmann; then I explore male representations by Burne-Jones in relation to sculpture. Secondly, I explore the way in which Eliot and Burne-Jones reinterpret elements of the Pygmalion myth into their own works.

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[376] The diary of George Henry Lewes notes: "We went to Burne-Jones to see his pictures" on 13 March, 1873. *Letters,* Vol. V, pp. 390-391. Eliot wrote a long letter to Burne-Jones on 20 March 1873, a part of which is cited at the beginning of my introduction. As Ormond points out, Eliot preferred visiting artists including Rossetti and Burne-Jones and seeing their works at their studios privately rather than going to public exhibitions. Ormond, 'George Eliot and The Victorian Art World' in *Review*, p. 27.

[377] *Memorials,* Vol. II, p .4.

[378] Ibid., p. 94.

George Eliot and Sculptural Representation

Like the nineteenth century artists who reconfigured ancient sculpture, Eliot increasingly contrived to emphasise visual effects especially through references to sculpture in her writing. The novelist obtained chances to have access not only to ancient sculpture but also to contemporary sculptors, and the exposure must have developed her views on the contemporary movement in sculptural art. During her stay in Italy, for example, Eliot met some artists and viewed their sculpture, yet she expresses an ambivalent view on contemporary works in her journal:

> We visited only four artists' studios in Rome: Gibson's the sculptor, Frey's the landscape painter, Ridel's the genre painter, and Overbeck's. Gibson's was entirely disappointing to me so far as his own sculptures are concerned: except that Cacciatore, which he sent to the Great Exhibition, I could see nothing but feeble imitation of the antique-- no spontaneity and no vigour. Miss Hosmer's Beatrice Cenci is a pleasing and new conception, and her little Puck a bit of humour that one would like to have if one were a grand Seigneur.[379]

Eliot's criticism especially focuses on one of the most well-known sculptors of the time, John Gibson. Eliot expects in sculptural works something beyond an imitation of antique sculpture, and thus she seeks to discover the rendering of metaphysical forces such as spontaneity and vigour in material forms like *Beatrice Cenci* (1857) by Harriet Hosmer, which Eliot defines as the embodiment of a new conception.

The employment of sculptural bodies or representations in Eliot's novels can thus be linked to the melding of her conception of the vigorous and physical, metaphysical and psychological force present in the medium of sculpture which becomes an important device through which to delineate fundamental meanings in her work.

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[379] *The Journals*, p. 346.

Eliot's ideas regarding the depiction of sculpture in her novels were partly influenced by contemporary fiction. From Florence, Eliot writes to her publisher, John Blackwood, in 1860, and relays her experiences: "Travel slowly even to this Italian Athens. Hawthorne's book is not to be found here yet in Tauchnitz edition."[380] Eliot read and admired the works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, notably the novel *The Marble Faun* (1860).[381] Hawthorne also stayed in Italy in 1858-59, and his novel elaborately delineates and deploys images of sculptures. Eliot's reference to the novel while staying in Florence, the place where antique sculpture flourishes, anticipates her next writing project, which would be injected with many images of sculpture.

Observing the sculptural representations in *The Marble Faun*, Patricia Pulham has demonstrated the way in which sculptural bodies channel ambiguous and unstable erotic desires including homoerotic intrigue between the characters. As Pulham suggests, the sculptural forms described by Hawthorne incorporate the ambiguous divisions between animation and stasis, instead of solely representing concrete and static values.[382] Furthermore, reference to the sculpture, *Beatrice Cenci*, which Eliot admires as is evident from the earlier quotation, is significantly implied in Hawthorne's text.[383] I observe that, like Hawthorne, Eliot links the metaphor of sculpture and sculptural representations particularly to the intense and blurring intersection of

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[380] Ibid., p. 300.

[381] Witemeyer points out that Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun* "taught Eliot how to use *ecphrasis*, or the verbal imitation of work of visual art, as a technique of psychological revelation and prophecy". *George Eliot and the Visual Arts*, p. 55.

[382] Patricia Pulham, 'Of Marble Men and Maidens': Sin, Sculpture, and Perversion in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Marble Faun"' in *The Yearbook of English Studies*, Vol. 40, No. ½ (2010, pp. 83-102).

[383] Pulham notes that Harriet Hosmer was believed to have romantic relationships with women. She considers the portrait of Beatrice Cenci by Guido Reni in relation to the sculpture by Hosmer, and charts the ambiguous relationship between the characters. See 'Of Marble Men and Maidens' Sin, Sculpture, and Perversion in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Marble Faun"' in *The Yearbook of English Studies*, pp. 90-91.

fluidity and stasis, internal and external force, the moment of transfiguration. I suggest that this element of ambiguity is eminently expressed in the views of Winckelmann on sculpture. Observing Eliot's sculptural representations in relation to the writings of Winckelmann, I suggest that despite Eliot's dismissal of Winckelmann, there is a particular conception of sculpture that is shared between the pair.

A New Type of Male Representation and Sculpture: Winckelmann and Eliot

An ambiguity and transformability in sculpture is strongly indicated in the writing of Winckelmann. In particular, the homoerotic views in his assessment of ancient works offered a reconsideration of the implications of sculpture for traditional ideals of masculinity. Winckelmann in his *History of the Art of Antiquity* admires young sculpted bodies, such as that of the *Apollo Belvedere*. In his essay, the beauty of youth and Greek sculpture are inseparable artistic commodities. Compared to its appearance in youth, Winckelmann describes the condition of the adult body as one where "nature has finished the realization of the appearance and thus fully determined it; in the aged, nature has begun to take apart her creation."[384] Whereas adults' bodies, having become solid forms, have finished their physical metamorphosis, young bodies represent uncertainty, possessing the potential for further physical transformation. Later, Walter Pater, in his essay on Winckelmann in *the Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, emphasises the same point about Greek sculpture dealing with the

[384] *HAA*, p. 197.

youthful body, whose structure and organs are in the midst of their development.[385] Winckelmann repeatedly maintains that there is a subtle movement ongoing within the young body: "A beautiful youthful creature is fashioned from such forms like the unity of the surface of the sea, which from a distance appears flat and still, like a mirror, even though it is constantly in motion and rolls in waves."[386] As an example of a young body, he observes a representation of Bacchus as an ideal youth: "His forms are soft and flowing as though blown by a gentle breeze, with almost no suggestion of bones and cartilage at the knees, just as this joint is formed in the most beautiful boys and eunuchs."[387] Young men, whose bodies are in the middle of their metamorphosis from childhood to adulthood, for Winckelmann, convey an androgynous image.[388] Their bodies, still under development, show not only the middle ground between boys and men but also that between the male and female body. For Winckelmann, Greek sculpture, in spite of its solid form in marble, presents a sense that young bodies keep undergoing a certain transformation, which in turn provides viewers with free, flexible, and unconstrained susceptibility to these beautiful art objects. [389]

Winckelmann observes fluid metaphysical dynamics in these concrete marble forms, which, for him, correspond to the fluidity of human flesh and psychology. He believes that sculpture is for enlarging our capacity of sensibility, and unlike George Eliot, Winckelmann emphasises sensuous and erotic sensibility in particular. In his 'Essay on the Beautiful in Art' (1763), he explains that:

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[385] *SHR*, p. 109.
[386] *HAA*, p. 197.
[387] Ibid., p. 201.
[388] Robert Aldrich, *Seduction of the Mediterranean: Writing, Art and Homosexual Fantasy* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 20.
[389] Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal*, p. 4.

> I have observed that those who are only aware of beauty in the female sex and are hardly or not at all affected by beauty in our sex, have little innate feeling for beauty in art in a general and vital sense. The same people have an inadequate response to the art of the Greeks, since their [the ancients] greatest beauties are more of our sex than the other.[390]

Winckelmann implores viewers to expand their aesthetic and erotic sensibility by communicating with the enticing bodies of ancient sculpture without any concrete bias towards gender dichotomy. To generate and sublimate a living physical feeling from material things such as these sculptures became significant for him, and to break the general idea that associates beauty with female sex is even more significant. Winckelmann thus suggests an elusive viewpoint in observing the sculpture. On the other hand, George Eliot's view is, of course, far from encouragement of the erotic imagination, nevertheless, there is a similar perspective with regard to her view on morality.

In *Middlemarch*, the heroine Dorothea Brooke is overtly compared to the figure of Ariadne from Greek mythology. Abigail Rischin links the novel to the myth by noting that Dorothea as Ariadne is abandoned by Casaubon as Theseus, and then rescued by Will Ladislaw as Bacchus.[391] Interestingly, as in my previous chapter has shown, the figure of Bacchus in *Romola* had been related to the handsome, epicurean Tito, who represents the antithesis of morality. In *Middlemarch,* on the other hand, while Ladislaw becomes an ambiguous figure, he turns out to be at least partially a heroic figure by rescuing Dorothea from her self-repression.

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[390] Cited in Aldrich, *Seduction of the Mediterranean*, p. 53.
[391] Abigail S. Rischin, 'Beside the Reclining Statue: Ekphrasis, Narrative and Desire in *Middlemarch*' in *PMLA*, Vol. 111, No. 5 (October, 1996, pp. 1121-1132).

Like the body of Bacchus, the social position of Will Ladislaw is elastic. As we have seen, Winckelmann defines the figure of Bacchus as an ideal youth whose form is "with almost no suggestion of bones and cartilage at the knees." Similarly, young Ladislaw, in fact, seems to have no social backbone but has a unique susceptibility. In fact, Ladislaw becomes the most significant new creation at a pivotal juncture for Eliot's work. Raymond Williams defines this character as "a free man in the way the others are not; a free mind with free emotion"; "coming from 'nowhere'; belonging to 'nowhere'; he is able to move, . . ."[392] Then George Levine points out that "Will is thus a critical figure in the change in George Eliot's art."[393] And what is especially unique about this male character is the way in which Eliot describes his appearance.

Eliot's descriptions of the physical bodies of her male characters convey their minds, especially their indescribable moral struggle and the development of their mental strength. For example, as Michael Davis demonstrates, in *Adam Bede*, Adam's healthy, masculine and soldier-like body is associated with his rigorous sense of morality. Davis observes that Adam's well-toned muscles anticipate his further moral development through which "a new mental habit, gained in experience, becomes a solid, permanent part of the self."[394] Adam has a positive potential for transformation in his shape, size, and his cemented ethical understanding.[395] His perfect and strong physical build connotes his idealisation of perfect morality in the world. Nonetheless, he is forced to undergo the reformation of his view after facing the reality of the

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[392] Raymond Williams, *The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1984), p. 93.
[393] George Levine, *The Realistic Imagination: Fiction from Frankenstein to Lady Chatterley* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 304.
[394] Michael Davis, *George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Psychology: Exploring the Unmapped County* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006), p. 30.
[395] Ibid.

immoral behaviour of Hetty and Arthur Donnithorne. His fidelity and commitment towards Donnithorne in terms of their social and class relationships and towards Hetty in terms of his love was almost observed as a form of universal law from Adam's perspective. Yet after the scandalous behaviour of the two is revealed, Adam experiences a subtle metamorphosis in his stubborn, moralising mind, that is as hard as marble, and he realises that " 'It's allays been easier for me to work nor to sit still, but the real tough job for me 'ud be to master my own will and temper and go right against my own pride.' " [396] Adam suffers from his own strong belief in the social morality that forged him, after the affair of Hetty and Arthur. There is a clear juxtaposition of Adam's strong pride and sculpted body, and Eliot depicts his emotional crisis that required him to obtain another kind of toughness to break his own fixed pride.

In contrast to the youthful physique of Adam, Edward Casaubon's physique in *Middlemarch* is that of an old man, and by the middle of the novel one that is deceased. Yet his will is as hard as that of Adam. Dorothea's sister, Celia, and her husband, Sir. James Chettam, underrate Casaubon, partly because they detest his peculiar old physique. The narrator describes his character as "fixed and unchangeable as bone."[397] Eliot compares his weak body to his insensitive inner self: "To know intense joy without a strong bodily frame, one must have an enthusiastic soul. Mr. Casaubon had never had a strong bodily frame, . . ."[398] The physical frame implies the feeble state of his inner soul and character. His egoistic and stubborn attachment to his work the "Key to All Mythologies" thus represents a contrast to his insensible and

[396] *AB*, p. 173. Also see Stump, *Movement and Vision in George Eliot's Novels*, p. 37.
[397] *M*, p. 230.
[398] Ibid., p. 313.

feeble physique. As Ladislaw points out that "[t]he subject Mr. Casaubon has chosen is as changing as chemistry,"[399] he implicitly suggests Casaubon's lack of elastic perspective.

Eliot overtly distinguishes the young man, Ladislaw, from the other male characters, especially the old man Casaubon in *Middlemarch*. In the relationship between the old and young in the novel, an odd and intense triangle emerges between Dorothea, Casaubon, and Ladislaw during their stay in Rome. Ladislaw stands in the middle of the couple, Dorothea and Casaubon. Such an implied triangular relationship in which two men compete for the same woman suggests René Girard's theory.[400] Yet it would seem extreme to interpret this unusual relationship existing between Casaubon and Ladislaw as an intensified homosocial relationship according to the theory of Eve Sedgewick.[401] Instead, Eliot's juxtaposition of Ladislaw and Casaubon puts into frame a comparison of the elasticity of human emotion, sensitivity, and passion.

The second volume of *Middlemarch* is entitled 'Old and Young.' We have discussed the female pairing in the Chapter I, and there exist other pairings in this novel: that is to say pairings of the old and young such as Dorothea and Casaubon; Fred Vincy and Mr. Featherstone; and, the most significant one representing a gulf in age, Ladislaw and Casaubon. Indeed, although they are cousins, the other characters in the novel often mistake Casaubon for his uncle due to the age disparity between them,

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[399] Ibid., p. 254.
[400] René Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore and London: The johns Hopkins UP, 1961).
[401] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia UP, 1985).

so the reader is repeatedly reminded of age difference in their relationship. In the novel, young Ladislaw floats in society without a fixed profession, while Casaubon's social position is already well established in his identity as a scholar. Ladislaw, having being educated in Heidelberg, Germany, is romantic, passionate and idealist. He draws, writes poems, and loves music. Despite the suggestion by Dorothea that he should become a painter, he denies this profession because he says he does not want to become fixed in one point of view, such as the studio point of view of a painter. He relishes his free position in society. The older generation, including Casaubon and Dorothea's uncle, Mr. Brooke, are somehow drawn to Ladislaw's education. Mr. Brooke especially patronises him and, admiring his youth, asks for his assistance with his paper, and compares him to Shelley and Byron. This elusive and ambiguous Ladislaw appears to be a relatively new type in contrast to Eliot's earlier moralistic male figures who are committed to their social duty. [402]

In addition to the social position of a young man such as Ladislaw, his physique is also seen as ambiguous. Like Tito in *Romola*, Eliot emphasises the enchanting appearance of Ladislaw. He is effeminized: Ladislaw's face shows a sexless attraction. When he visits Dorothea alone in Rome, she receives a peculiar impression from his smile: he looked "much the younger, for his transparent complexion flushed suddenly, and he spoke with shyness extremely unlike the ready indifference of his manner with his male companion, . . ."[403] Dorothea feels amused when seeing his smile again, because of his attractive appearance:

[402] Levine, *The Realistic Imagination*, p. 304.
[403] *M*, p. 237.

> … it was a gush of inward light illuminating the transparent skin as well as the eye, and playing about every curve and line as if some Ariel were touching them with a new charm, and banishing for ever the trace of moodiness.[404]

She is also drawn to his changeful appearance. His beautiful transparent skin and the expression of his sensitive shyness imply an effeminizing characteristic as well as the fact of his youth. Ladislaw's delicate physical appearance is also clearly in contrast to Eliot's earlier creation of traditional masculine types including Adam in *Adam Bede* and Tom Tulliver in *The Mill on the Floss*. Ladislaw thus brings to Eliot's novels a fresh element of masculinity, and this ambivalent, fluid part of Ladislaw epitomises the development of human emotion and ethical viewpoints in *Middlemarch*.

Of all the male sculptures, Winckelmann defines the *Apollo Belvedere*, *the Belvedere Antinous*, the *Laocoön*, and the *Belvedere Torso* as those examples that for him present the most ideal and perfected beauty. This is especially true of the *Torso*, which is linked to the figure of Hercules "in [the]stage of transfiguration after being ravaged by a poisoned cloak and burned alive."[405] Meanwhile, it "represent[s] humanity in a higher state of worthiness."[406] In fact, Ladislaw in *Middlemarch*, is implicitly juxtaposed with the *Belvedere Torso* at the Vatican museum. In the scene at the museum, Eliot lets Ladislaw stand in front of this sculpture.

> One fine morning a young man [Ladislaw] whose hair was not immoderately long, but abundant and curly, and who was otherwise English in his equipment, had just turned his back on the Belvedere Torso in the Vatican and was looking out on the magnificent view of the mountains from the adjoining round

[404] Ibid., p. 237-8.
[405] Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal*, p. 4.
[406] *HAA,* p. 202.

> vestibule. He was sufficiently absorbed not to notice the approach of a dark-eyed, animated German who came up to him. [407]

In front of the Torso, Ladislaw stands apparently in deep contemplation, and yet the truth of the character's state of mind is not explained in this scene. In this description, Eliot attempts to bring a visual effect by juxtaposing the *Belvedere Torso* and the image of the young and self-absorbed Ladislaw, with abundant and curly long hair, who like the statue remains still. There occurs a remarkable contrast between the ancient, immortal and solid material of the Torso and the modern, living, young beauty of Ladislaw as if the pair of bodies are meant to be viewed together.

What is more, Winckelmann's observations on the contours of the *Belvedere Torso* [Fig. 13] have a significant relation to Eliot's delineation of the relationship between the human physique and implicit morality. Winckelmann's descriptions of the sculpture convey the image of a flow of contour and muscle that is "a highly idealized form and beauty, but they are like the surge of a calm sea, flowing sublimely in a gently changing beat."[408] Winckelmann induces the viewer to sense the subtle flow of the sculptural body. Alex Potts maintains that in Winckelmann's observation "[a] contour becomes a means of overcoming the material resistance of sculpture to the dematerializing projections of the mind."[409] Namely, "[i]t is through contour that

[407] *M*, p. 219.
[408] *HAA*, p. 201.
[409] Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal*, p. 172.

Fig. 13
The Belvedere Torso, The Vatican Museums.
The photographs taken by Maho Sakoda.

Winckelmann negotiates an interplay between the literally dead materiality of the actual sculpture and the ostensibly live flesh of the body it represents."[410] The flow of the contour of the Torso thus sublimates the material form into a metaphysical form that is subjective to the viewer. In other words, it also indicates the unification of beauty and the sublime, or physicality and metaphysics, as for Winckelmann, the contours can project both elements of an accomplished form and living impulses that keep changing.

In Eliot's novel, the descriptions of physicality also become projections of the realms of metaphysics and psychology. Like the contour of the *Belvedere Torso*, Ladislaw's appearance simultaneously demonstrates a fullness of movement. When Dorothea meets him for the second time in Rome, the narrator describes him in the following way:

> The first impression on seeing Will was one of sunny brightness, which added to *the uncertainty of his changing expression*. Surely, his very features changed their form; his jaw looked sometimes large and sometimes small; and the little ripple in his nose was *a preparation for metamorphosis*." [411] [Italics mine]

During his first meeting with Dorothea, Ladislaw looks moody and behaves oddly, and irrationally judges Dorothea as being unpleasant and dull simply because she is Casaubon's wife; when he approaches her again, and observes her unhappy marital life with Casaubon, he becomes sympathetic towards her. His sensibility is flexible enough to sympathise with this female struggle and his physical traits, namely, his changing nose and jaw, are part of a holistic metamorphosis indicating that his susceptibility and elastic sympathy go beyond the established mind or sense of

[410] Ibid.
[411] *M*, p. 241.

morality. Ladislaw's figure is thus not as simple a masculine archetype as Adam's. Unlike this diligent carpenter who represents a moralistic masculine stereotype, Ladislaw represents "preparation for metamorphosis" hinted at in the description of his nose. This ambiguity represents for Eliot a new aspect for her male characterisation. *Daniel Deronda,* in her final novel, also inherits this element of ambiguity: Deronda epitomises a sense of uncertainty and Eliot often describes him as "neutral" because he avoids giving moral judgements. Indeed, he naturally accepts the pivotal trajectory of his identity from an English gentleman to a Jew; moreover, he is effeminised. Effeminacy in the novels of Eliot indicates the elimination of patriarchal morality and an increase in human susceptibility.

The Force of Turning to Stone: the *Laocoön* and the *Niobe*

If Ladislaw can thus be seen as the new type for Eliot, I argue that his process of experiencing external reality and his inner self is highlighted by the descriptions of sculpture. While Eliot believes sympathy for others enlarges our own moral frame, W.J Harvey observes that "the process of awakening and extending moral insight and sympathy through the agency of the imagination working upon particulars"[412] is an essential facet of Eliot's moral principles. In this section, I first examine the sculptures *Laocoön* and *Niobe* that Winckelmann compares in his essay, and then consider the way in which Eliot depicts her characters' psychological battles.

[412] W. J Harvey, *The Art of George Eliot* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1969), p. 40.

Winckelmann's reading of *Niobe* and *Laocoön* demonstrates the unity of metaphysical and physical dynamics in the solid form.[413] The statue of *Niobe* presents the moment when she witnesses her daughters and sons being killed by Diana and Apollo; at this moment the grief transforms the mother into stone. *Laocoön* [Fig. 14] is represented in the scene in which he was entangled by a serpent sent by God as a punishment. These dramatic and all-consuming moments are brought into sharp focus through the simple yet dynamic form of the works. Winckelmann especially admires the sculpture of *Laocoön*, the mature male figure posed in an extremely intense moment, with his dynamic musculature on display.

Winckelmann's observation invites the viewer to feel both Laocoön's physical pain and his noble inner self encased within his marble body. Winckelmann writes that:

> The physical pain and the nobility of soul are disturbed with equal strength over the entire body and are, as it were, held in balance with one another. . . ; his pain touches our souls, but we wish that we could bear misery like this great man.[414]

Winckelmann also notes that: "the expression of such nobility of soul goes far beyond the depiction of beautiful nature. The artist had to feel the strength of this spirit in himself and then impart it to his marble."[415] As Potts points out, in these two figures, the power of rhetoric is represented as an annihilating intervention of divine power in

[413] Potts analyses Winckelmann's dichotomisation of the *Niobe* as High beauty and the *Laocoön* as beautiful style. See *Flesh and the Ideal*, pp. 82-83.
[414] *HAA*, p. 35.
[415] Ibid.

the lives of mortals.[416] Thus *Niobe* and *Laocoön,* are not only represented in stone, but also they vividly stand for an invisible and divine power.

George Eliot often uses transformation into marble as a rhetorical device in order to highlight the moment when the force of external reality violently intervenes into an interior world. Adam in *Adam Bede* might be said to experience a similar situation to Laocoön. For he struggles with both emotional and physical pain when he learns that Hetty and Arthur are having an affair. Adam experiences physical pain by fighting with Arthur while struggling with the emotional pain caused by Hetty's unfaithful behaviour. More specifically, Adam's pain for Hetty and Arthur is communicated through Eliot's sculptural metaphor: "He remained as motionless as a statue, and turned almost as pale"; "He stood as if petrified by an unseen force, but the force was his own strong will."[417] The descriptions indicate outer and inner forces. His pain, anger and despair are locked into his powerful but petrified bodily frame, together with his strong soul and he is in control of this emotional attack. The pair of Laocoön and Adam here project noble inner strength although their bodies rest in repose as they are petrified: Eliot explains that "there is but one way in which a strong determined soul can lean it—by getting his heart—string bound round the weak and erring, so that he must share not only the outward consequences of their error, but their inward suffering."[418]

[416] Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal*, p. 108.
[417] *AB*, p. 255-256.
[418] Ibid., p. 181.

Fig. 14
Laccoön and His Sons, The Vatican Museums
The photographs taken by Maho Sakoda.

Eliot includes the sculpture of Niobe in the list of the pieces she saw at the Uffizi Gallery.[419] And when Eliot uses the imagery of sculpture to depict the peak of Ladislaw's psychological turbulence in *Middlemarch*, the effect is analogous to that in the sculpture of Niobe. When Ladislaw has increasingly strong feelings toward Dorothea and she accidentally visits Rosamond when Ladislaw is alone with her, Dorothea is shocked to see them together in person. Eliot relates his reaction in the following way: "Will Ladislaw, starting up, looked round also, and meeting Dorothea's eyes with a new lighting in them, seemed changing to marble."[420] His confusion and fear that Dorothea will misunderstand the situation continues as his face is "…changing from pink to white and back again, as if his whole frame were tingling with the pain of the sting."[421] Here we can see the juxtaposition of the paralysed bodily frame and the emotional pain stored inside as theorised by Winckelmann. Ladislaw's changing colour shows his sudden rush of emotion. This impulse causes him physical pain, and he stays motionless in the room since he has no impulse to go after Dorothea to dispel the misunderstanding. Instead, he stays with his anger: "He was fuming under a repressive law which he was forced to acknowledge: he was dangerously poised,…"[422] His anger battles a certain repression like the helpless internal struggling of one frozen in the middle of a dreadful event. In this moment when Ladislaw endures emotional pain, Eliot uses the image of the body turning to stone to illustrate his invisible psychological battle, in contrast to the apparent stillness in reality.

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[419] Eliot listed "the great Niobe group; the Venus de' Medici; the Wrestlers" in her journal. See *The Journals*, p. 357.
[420] *M*, p. 832.
[421] Ibid., p .834.
[422] Ibid., p. 835.

Eliot further uses the metaphor of the statue to suggest that Ladislaw and Dorothea become aware of the power of each other's presence. It is apparent in the scene in which Ladislaw visits Dorothea to say farewell once he has decided to leave Middlemarch.

> The blood had mounted to his [Ladislaw's] face and neck, and he looked almost angry. It had seemed to him as if they were like two creatures slowly turning to marble in each other's presence, while their hearts were conscious and their eyes were yearning. [423]

Eliot uses the petrification simile to effectively describe the extent to which Ladislaw's presence affects Dorothea and *vice versa*. In other words, she employs the concept of turning into set material or taking on a form that is a mixture of flesh and stone to symbolise the indescribable and metaphorical force in the web of human relationships. Dorothea's and Ladislaw's realisations of selves occur when they each become aware of the presence of the other.

While a comparison between Eliot's novel and Winckelmann's art theory might appear unusual, especially since she is generally seen as disregarding his aesthetic ideas, both believed in the possibility of the metamorphosis of people's sensibility. More importantly, Eliot and Winckelmann employ images of sculpture, or sculpture itself to describe mutable and fluid sensibility. Eliot believed that people can be morally improved by enlarging their sympathy towards others.[424] Winckelmann, on the other hand, stresses the importance of an ability to find beauty not only in the female body but also in the male body. Winckelmann demonstrates the way in which

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[423] *M*, p. 588.
[424] Suzy Anger, 'George Eliot and Philosophy' in George Levine, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to George Eliot* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, pp. 76-97), p. 80.

viewers can elevate their state of mind by communicating with the body in sculpture. For Eliot and Winckelmann, sculpture can convey the instability and unseen impulse of human sensitivity.

Burne-Jones and Sculpturesque Representations

Burne-Jones once confessed to his friend, Lady Lewis, that " 'If ever my eyes grow dim . . . I will give up painting and take to sculpture' " and the painter continued that " 'it is the fate of all pictures and books to be burnt, it is only a matter of time; but sculpture has a chance of living in some form or other.' "[425] The painter seems to have been preoccupied with the presence of sculpture throughout his career. His aspiration to be a sculptor is shown in a controversial work of his later career, *Perseus and the Graiae* (1877) made of silver and gold leaf, gesso and oil and oak, which confused reviewers.[426] [Fig. 15] Burne-Jones was attracted to the capacity of Greek sculpture to survive for many centuries and thereby successfully preserve the timeless beauty of these bodies portrayed; the antique pieces maintained eternal value, and admiring the embodiment of the physical and the metaphysical in the static material form of sculpture,[427] Burne-Jones seeks to convey the equivalent through his painting.

[425] Cited in John Christian 'Burne-Jones and Sculpture' in eds. Benedict Read and Joanna Barnes, *Pre-Raphaelite Sculpture: Nature and Imagination in British Sculpture 1848-1914* (Lund Hampshire and London: The Henry Moore Foundation, 1991, pp.77-91), p. 77.
[426] *Victorian Sculpture*, pp. 390-392.
[427] Ibid., p. 51.

The work of Burne-Jones is sometimes referred to as "escapism," or "fantasy," as his creations were far from realist depictions.[428] He often acquired his inspiration from the narratives of mythology and literature, but Burne-Jones's representations often appear devoid of living energy. Moreover, regardless of my hypothesis that the painter was influenced by sculpture, his human figures often appear flat with a significant lack of emphasis on three-dimensionality. Henry James criticized Burne-Jones's painting for appearing "too flat."[429] In fact, the flatness and stasis in his work indicates an aspect of modernity as well as his reconfiguration of classical art and David Peters Corbett views his work as "mobiliz[ing] its static dream like images of a non-existent world."[430]

The discussion which follows focuses on this idea of mobilisation in relation to sculpture: Bearing in mind my previous argument addressing the way in which George Eliot deploys sculptural representation in relation to mobility, I further examine the deployment of sculptural representation in his painting. Peters Corbett rightly describes one of Burne-Jones's paintings as being akin to a frieze.[431] And this comparison highlights a complex element of his paintings, namely that ability to convey the dynamics of sculptural art together with the contrasting flatness of a representation on canvas. The painter, in fact, seemingly did attempt to paint his figures as if they were three-dimensional studies. In describing his work, *Avalon*, he explains this in the following way:

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[428] David Peters Courbett, 'Visuality and Unmediation in Burne-Jones's Laus Veneris,' p. 85.
[429] Henry James, ed. John Sweeney, *The Painter's Eye: Notes and Essays on the Pictorial Arts* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1956), p.164.
[430] Corbett, 'Visuality and Unmediation in Burne-Jones's Laus Veneris,' p. 84.
[431] Ibid.

Fig. 15

Edward Burne-Jones, *Perseus and the Graiae* (1877) Silver and gold leaf, gesso, and oil on oak, National Museum Wales.

> It won't do to design painting hands or much detail in this picture till it's all settled, I do so believe in getting in the bones of a picture properly first, then putting on the flesh and afterwards the skin last of all combining its hair and sending it forth to the world. If you begin with the flesh and the skin and trust to getting the bone afterward, it's such a very slippery process.[432]

Here he envisages the process of painting with a three dimensional viewpoint. Moreover, he is highly conscious of the process through which his abstract conception is transformed into a concrete, human figure. The subjects he chose to paint also imply transformation as most clearly represented by his *Pygmalion* series of paintings that depict the statue of Pygmalion coming to life. In addition to this most obvious example there is *Phyllis and Demophoon* (1870) which portrays the narrative of Phyllis becoming transformed into an almond tree by grief, and the subject of *Beguiling of Merlin* (1972-7) who is enchanted by Nimue and entombed in a hawthorn tree. Thus the work of Burne-Jones, in spite of the necessary depiction of these narratives suspended at particular moments, connotes the process of transformation.

Bronze men and marble women

Like Winckelmann's categorisation of *Niobe* as sublime and *Laocoön* as beautiful, the way in which Burne-Jones differentiates the human physiques of men and women is worth noting. Burne-Jones's ideas concerning the sexual dimorphism of the human body are clearly stated his comment of 1895:

[432] *Memorials*, Vol. II, p. 323.

> A woman's shape is best in repose, but the fine thing about a man is that he is such a splendid machine, so you can put him in motion, and make as many knobs and joints and muscle about him as you can.[433]

This conception seems to reflect the traditional gender polarity in which men become actively represented while women are passive. Indeed, Burne-Jones's association of machines with the male physique in motion is also apparent in the review of Frederic Leighton's the *Athlete* in the *Fortnightly Review*: "[The *Athlete*] must be judged simply as a representation of that grand machine, thus the human figure, in a state of nervous and concentrated action."[434]

In his later career, Burne-Jones engaged in the creation of series of paintings, such as the series of *Pygmalion and the Image* (1875-78), that of *Perseus* and also *the Briar Rose* (1885-1890). In fact, the juxtaposition of male figures in movement and female figures in repose is demonstrated in all of these three different series. This triplet of stories he chose to draw are furthermore closely linked. The female representations are in certain immovable circumstances, and yet they are released by the male protagonists in the end. In *Pygmalion,* for example, the female sculpture is brought to life by the desire of the male protagonist; in the Perseus series, Andromeda, whose body is chained to a rock as a sacrifice to a sea monster, is released by Perseus; In the *Briar Rose* series based on the story of Sleeping Beauty, the princess sleeping under enchantment is eventually awakened by the Prince's kiss. While the images show male figures in action with females in repose, the bodies of the each of these female representations become free to move.

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[433] *Memorials*, Vol. II, p. 269.
[434] Cited in David J Gesty, *Body Doubles,* p. 72.

However, it seems that the painter also depicts male figures in repose in his later work; tellingly, these examples are in addition feminised. Burne-Jones persistently dealt with the opposing properties of the male and female body. Yet, despite his comment above, he did not apply orthodox rules to the juxtaposition of gender in his paintings. As Bullen points out the representations by Burne-Jones— effeminate men and masculine women— exist as an "undefined neutral." [435] In the three series of paintings mentioned above, Burne-Jones depicts the bodies of trapped female figures as if they were sculptures of marble. (Of course in the case of the Pygmalion series, the female figure is an actual sculpture). The nude female bodies display curvy and smooth contours, and are heavily rooted to the ground. By contrast, the male bodies are awkwardly covered by drapery or armour. Despite the fact that the artist states his preference for adding "muscle and knobs" to male figures, these masculine physiological details can hardly be seen in the figures of these particular three series; rather, the male protagonists look emasculated. And especially in the works of the *Perseus* and *Briar Rose* series the images of the armoured heroes, Perseus and the prince respectively, are devoid of any distinct masculine attributes. Moreover, this is evident in spite of the fact that they are involved in physical contact and their rewards, namely their future wives, are seen waiting for them. Their bodies indicate an "uncertainty" regarding their physical properties and their sexual desire for the female figures.

An armoured body conveyed the idea of masculinity in Victorian iconography, whereas a naked one did so Greek sculpture. [436] This emblem of Victorian heroism can

[435] J B.Bullen, *Pre-Raphaelite Body: Fear and Desire in Painting, Poetry, and Criticism*, p. 157.
[436] Joseph A. Kestner, *Masculinities in Victorian Painting* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995), p. 235.

be seen in many of the paintings of the time by other artists, including J. E. Millais's *The Knight-Errant* (1870), Frederic Leighton's *A Condottiere* (1872), Arthur Hughes's *Sir Galahad* (1870), and yet of all these painters, Burne-Jones painted a considerable number of images of armoured male figures in an unorthodox fashion. Observing these pervasive images of knights or heroes during the Victorian time, Joseph Kestner notes that armour signified manliness; therefore, it transformed the male body into the masculine symbol, implying a hard phallic image as "the permanent erection." [437]

However, a recent discussion of armoured representations in the paintings of Burne-Jones by Caroline Arscott has brought forth a fresh point of view. She argues that the vulnerability of the body is emphasised by the armour in the paintings of Perseus, St. George, and the *Rose Briar* series. For example, she observes that Perseus's insect-like armour in *Doom Fulfilled* (1885-88) seems to bear more of an appearance of his skin peeling.[438] The male figure gives the impression that he is shedding his skin; therefore, it can be assumed that his body is experiencing a process of metamorphosis, something like ecdysis.[439]

The Rock of Doom (1885-1888) [Fig.16] and *The Doom Fulfilled* [Fig. 17] chart a unique juxtaposition of Perseus and Andromeda. In *The Rock of Doom*, Andromeda's resemblance to a marble sculpture is exaggerated by her smooth contours and perfect conventional contrapposto, echoing the Greek female marbles such as that of Venus. In the original tale in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Perseus mistakes Andromeda for a

[437] Ibid.
[438] Caroline Arscott, *William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones: Interlacings* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2008), p. 71.
[439] Ibid.

sculpture from a distance.[440] At his second look, Perseus then has a Pygmalion moment: He finds that Andromeda, who, he had recognised as a statue, is actually alive, so Andromeda is transformed from stone to flesh from the point of view of Perseus. Therefore, it might not be coincidental that Perseus's actual encounter with Andromeda in Burne-Jones's *The Rock of Doom*, shows composition analogous to *The Hand Refrained* from the Pygmalion series. When encountering beautiful female figures, both Perseus and Pygmalion confront them, which results in male and female figures composed in a form of symmetry.

However, a viewer might find this style of composition in *The Rock of Doom* and *The Doom Fulfilled* somewhat uncomfortable, for one body is fully covered whereas the other is naked. Especially, in the Perseus images, it seems that there is a collision between Andromeda's body, exposed and vulnerable, and Perseus's body, protected by metal armour. Quite different from Andromeda, who obviously shows her sex through the exposure of her breasts and genitals, Perseus's body is covered and yet looks effeminate. Still, Perseus's armour plays a significant role in highlighting his corporeality by making the viewer very conscious of his actual flesh inside the armour. The elusive flesh inside is implied by his sword hanging in front of his genitals, as this juxtaposition presents the image and idea of a fear of castration. Arscott also opines that Perseus's armour appears to be a part of his body, fitting and adhering to it, like

[440] *Ovid's Metamorphoses,* trans. Arthur Golding (London: Penguin, 2002), p. 145. Also see Fabian Fröhlich, 'The Perseus Series' in *Edward Burne-Jones: The Earthly Paradise*, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart and Kunstmuseum Bern (Ostfildern, Hatje Cantz: 2009, pp.103-135), p. 127.

Fig. 16
Edward Burne-Jones, *The Rock of Doom* (1885-88), oil, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart.

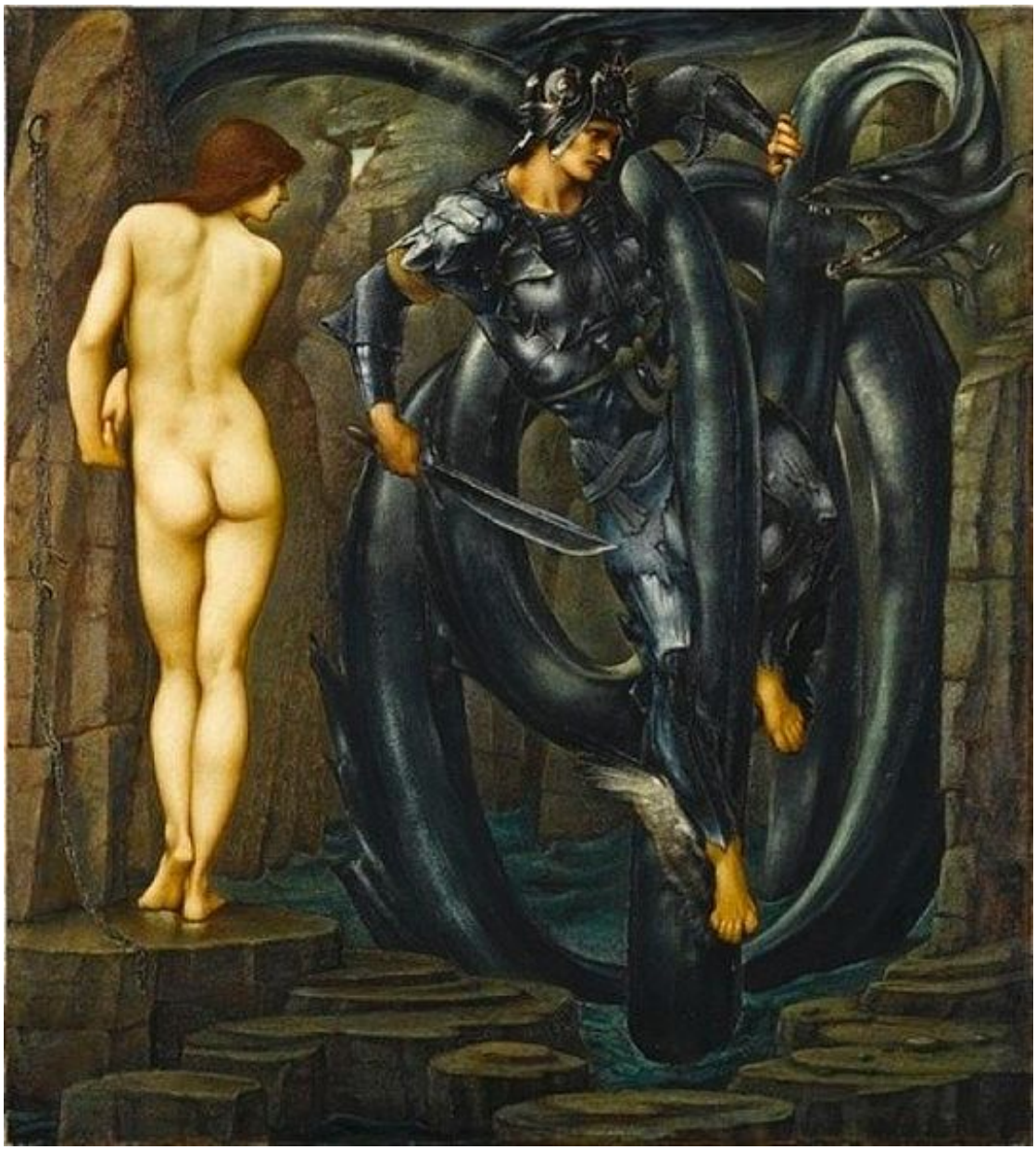

Fig. 17

Edward Burne-Jones, *The Doom Fulfilled* (1885-88), Staatsgalerie Stuttgart.

an elastic body suit. The armour looks softer and anatomically traces his body parts.[441] His shiny and body-mapping armour, which is without blemishes, also uncovers his youthful soft physique. The armour in Burne-Jones's paintings, therefore suggests and aestheticises the male physique thereby resonating with the figure of the male nude.

Burne-Jones's Perseus figure, rendered with a smooth and shiny surface and a contour reflecting much light, resembles a bronze sculpture of a nude male. The armoured body of Perseus which is expected to be hard is finished with a smooth and delicate touch, indicating a fluid surface. In *The Rock of Doom*, similar to a delicate undulation on the body of bronze statues, each juncture of his armour in the painting reflects the light and emphasises his body structure as in an anatomical sketch.[442]

Bronze became a significant material for sculpture in the nineteenth century. Ancient sculptures made of marble were regarded as Roman copies of Greek works, and the original was believed to have been cast in bronze.[443] Bronze statues contributed to the development of British sculpture in the New Sculpture movement in the late nineteenth-century.[444] Auguste Rodin and Frederic Leighton initiated this art movement in Europe, and Prettejohn suggests that "Leighton's and Rodin's statues demonstrate what a bronze 'original' could look like. Both approaches are faithful to the possibilities of their respective materials, so they produce very different results;

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[441] Arscott, *William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones: Interlacings*, pp.70-71.
[442] Ibid.
[443] Also it is believed the *Apollo Belvedere* was a copy of the bronze original. See Elizabeth Prettejohn, *The Modernity of Ancient Sculpture: Greek Sculpture and Modern Art from Winckelmann to Picasso* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 151-152.
[444] Interestingly, George Eliot also shows an increasing interest in Bronze statues. For example, in her recollection of Italy, she writes that "The Bronzes here are even more interesting than the marble"; Also one day before she embarked on the writing of *Middlemarch*, her diary notes in 1869 "On Tuesday afternoon we went to the British Museum to see a new bronze, …" in *The Journals*, p. 137; p. 351. Also, as mentioned earlier in the introduction, Watts gave Eliot a copy of the Bronze bust, *Clytie* in 1870. See footnote 9.

Leighton and Rodin exploit the capacity of bronze to expand into three-dimensional space, as well as its nuances of texture, . . ."[445] Before the 1870s, bronze was an unpopular material, mainly used for monuments, and therefore associated with a lack of ideality or imagination.[446] However, Leighton's bronze statue, *Athlete Wrestling with a Python*, shown at the Royal Academy in 1877, became an important icon for the Victorian art world and a pivotal piece. Young sculptors like Alfred Gilbert and Hamo Thornycroft contributed to further revitalizing British Bronze sculpture. Compared to heavy marble, bronze made it possible to express light, delicate, flexible nuance, and allow naturalistic rendering.[447] What is significant in this new sculptural movement is the creation of a new image of the male physique since bronze was increasingly used for the male nude to emphasise the unity of naturalistic rendering and aesthetic aspects.

Bronze sculptures in fact highlight the ambiguous ideology concerning masculinity in the late nineteenth-century. Male bronze representations in particular can be grouped into two opposing types: Traditional masculinity is represented in Leighton's *Athlete:* while an entirely different representation is given by the other less active figure in, more aesthetic repose, represented by Alfred Gilbert's *Perseus Arming* (1881-3) or *Icarus* (1882-4). The former type conveys a masculine body, whereas the latter type renders the body effeminate and invites the viewer to consider a psychological moment. Contemporary artists including Leighton, Thornycroft, and Gilbert, discovered an aesthetic potentiality in bronze. Unlike marble as a material, bronze allowed sculptors to render human physicality elastically. Robert Upstone

[445] Prettejohn, *The Modernity of Ancient Sculpture*, pp. 157-8.
[446] Getsy, *Body Double,* p. 21.
[447] Prettejohn, *The Modernity of Ancient Sculpture*, p. 152.

suggests that the "sensuous surface [of bronze sculpture was] capable of embodying emotional expression." [448] Like Winckelmann's observations on contours, the bronze surface of sculptural bodies became the catalyst for the projection of the interior world in relation to the material world.

In Burne-Jones's Perseus series, both his male and female figures present sculpturesque bodies. But they can be further separated into the two different types, namely, bronze and marble. The male figures are depicted as if they were bronze sculptures, whereas the female figures appear as if they were marble sculptures. *The Rock of Doom* implicitly shows that the painter gendered marble as passive and female, and bronze as active and male.

Alfred Gilbert's bronze statue, *Perseus Arming*, [Fig. 18] first exhibited in 1882 is highly influenced by Burne-Jones's paintings of Perseus. The bronze Perseus is checking his sandal and the figure is characterised a soft and adolescent body devoid of muscular attributes. Gilbert commented on his statue, saying that Perseus used to be a mortal and was nothing but a man, before becoming a hero.[449] Casually checking on his sandal that might be too big for his undeveloped young body he anticipates the

[448] Robert Upstone, 'Symbolism in Three Dimensions' in Andrew Wilton, ed., *The Age of Rossetti, Burne-Jones, and Watts: Symbolism in Britain 1860-1910* (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1998, pp. 83-92), p. 84.
[449] Smith, *The Exposed*, p. 116.

Fig. 18

Alfred Gilbert, *Perseus Arming* (1882), bronze, Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge.

process of transformation from adolescence to masculine adulthood. Moreover, his checking an item of his clothing suggests a narcissistic aspect.[450] This androgynous behaviour echoes the depiction of Burne-Jones's males figures hitherto discussed. In *Perseus and The Sea Nymphs*, [Fig. 19] by Burne-Jones, Perseus, looking adolescent, wears a body suit-like armour, flexibly stretching his arms toward his sandal and bending the legs. His attitude is devoid of heroic masculinity and he seems to be hesitating with a lack of masculine determination and directness. Instead of displaying physicality in an active movement, he looks contemplative. This humanised and almost apathetic demeanour of a hero inspired the young sculptor Alfred Gilbert.

In *Perseus and The Sea Nymphs*, like *The Rock of Doom*, there is a juxtaposition of sculptural imagery: the male figure as bronze statues in each case and the female figures as marble ones. The Nereids, the sea nymphs, on the left side contrast with Perseus on this occasion. Their fine draperies are a typical trait of Greek marble sculpture, and these vestments are especially seen on the Parthenon goddesses displayed at the British Museum.[451] Moreover, the composition of the sea nymphs in *Perseus and The Sea Nymphs* is almost identical to that of the sculpture of the Three Graces, a Roman copy of the Greek statue made in the second century BC and housed in the Louvre. Burne-Jones applies this traditional composition with the woman in the middle turned toward the back, and the other two facing the front. Burne-Jones also depicts the figures of the Three Graces in *The Heart Desires* of the Pygmalion series as

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[450] Jason Edwards, *Alfred Gilbert's Aestheticism: Gilbert Amongst Whistler, Wilde, Leighton, Pater and Burne-Jones* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 44-45.

[451] Fabian Fröhlich suggests the similarity between the figures of Graiae in Burne-Jones's *Perseus and the Graiae* and the Parthenon goddesses seen in the British Museum. 'The Perseus Series' in *Edward Burne-Jones: Earthly Paradise* (Ostfildern:Hejte Cantz, 2010, pp. 103-135), pp. 113-115.

Fig. 19
Edward Burne-Jones, *Perseus and the Sea Nymphs* (1877-98), oil, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart.

well. In this painting, the three graces are actually rendered as marble sculptures in the background of the piece.

Perseus in *The Doom Fulfilled* is analogous to Leighton's *Athlete*. [Fig. 20] Although Leighton's sculpture has been compared to the *Laocoön*, it conveys a different nuance because it is made of bronze. Leighton achieves an aesthetic eroticism of the Athlete's physique by making use of the more flexible material. While the python displays its skin with delicate scales, the athlete's physique has an affinity with the smoothly coiled python's body. A physical communication between different skins is highlighted through the Athlete's leg, genital area, armpit and arm, which are in contact with the great snake. David J. Getsy comments on a certain effect of the python that "brings the viewer in direct contact with a body part that had been traditionally concealed or, at the very least, isolated. Representing the penis in sensuous contact with another body was an even more unconventional move than simply exposing it in the first place."[452] Leighton makes the most of the python's contact with the athlete's body three dimensionally, so much so that the python invites us to follow it and walk around the body of the athlete and communicate with it as a whole.

This sensuous communication between the snake's body and the hero's body is also depicted in *The Doom Fulfilled*. In this painting, we can see the athlete's dynamic motion, as he fights against the snake-like sea monster. The uncomfortable posture of Perseus set in the air while holding the sea-monster with his left hand, creates a

[452] Getsy, *Body Doubles,* p. 32.

Fig. 20

Frederic Leighton, *An Athlete Wrestling with a Python* (1877), Bronze, the Tate Britain.

certain bodily exertion. Like Leighton's Athlete and the python, the bodies of Perseus and the monster are in erotically charged contact. The monster's body causes the viewer to be conscious of Perseus's body in three dimensions. Moreover, as many scholars suggest, the sea monster symbolizes his phallic organ. The colour of the armour and the sea-monster are identical, and thus the monster appears as part of his body. The position of the monster also makes us explicitly aware of the phallic imagery through its contact with Perseus's body.

While Leighton's *Athlete* demonstrates the idealized masculine body through the medium of bronze, Alfred Gilbert's bronzes show a different conception of the male body. Gilbert, trained at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris and greatly admired Burne-Jones. Likewise, the painter regarded the young sculptor highly:

> As for my sculptor—Hah! Yes—there is an artist, and someone to expect, and a thing to happen—we are such friends that we are shy of meeting. I haven't seen him this year—only I hear that he talks about me and I know that I think about him a great deal. I do think a big creature is going to happen. [453]

Gilbert was enamoured by Burne-Jones's paintings, and so his sculptures show a profound influence of Burne-Jones's aesthetic in the *Perseus* and *Rose Briar* series. Gilbert's work also epitomizes Burne-Jones's conceptions of masculinity thus to examine Gilbert's work helps us to re-interpret Burn-Jones's ideas, particularly as presented in his homoerotic, effeminate male figures.

Gilbert's bronze works are often associated with homoeroticism. As mentioned earlier, his prominent works such as *Perseus Arming* and *Icarus* clearly render the adolescent boy's body. Jason Edwards points out that Gilbert's sculptures also suggest

[453] *Memorials*, Vol. II, p. 147.

an affinity with Pater's writing on Winckelmann. In *Perseus*, for example, Gilbert achieves Winckelmann's concept of the ideal young body; Pater notes that in the figure, "the moulding of the bodily organs is still as if suspended between growth and completion."[454] Moreover Edwards notes a gynecomastia in Perseus's body, whose nipples appear to be swelling.[455] Indeed, his curvy and less than muscular body is further aestheticsed by his contrapposto posture, namely, his act of slightly lifting his right foot and leaning his torso backward. In his sculpture, any dynamic physical actions are reduced and rendered as a moment of repose. Gilbert suspends the completion of the bodily transformation from youth to adulthood. He projects the middle period of this metamorphosis of the male body.

As Burne-Jones's own self-portraits might suggest, which present him as weak, skinny, and physically exhausted, the artist often failed to finish his paintings due to ill health. His wife, Georgiana, recalls in the *Memorials* that he was afraid of pain, often saying that" 'It's very nasty being ill— it has no merits.'"[456] He reminisced about the days when he was young:

> "I used long ago to like fencing very much. I used the foils at Oxford a great deal; I used to get on rather well with them. I was quick, and though not strong, had a fairly strong wrist and could overbear my antagonist by momentary vehemence."[457]

His nostalgia for his youthful days apparently concerns his earlier physical strength and ability to engage in athletic activity. Like the heroes represented in his paintings, such

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[454] Edwards, *Alfred Gilbert's Aestheticism*, p. 50. See also *SHR*, p. 109.
[455] Edwards, *Alfred Gilbert's Aestheticism*, p. 50.
[456] *Memorials,* Vol. II, p. 3.
[457] Quoted in Mary Lago, *Burne-Jones Talking His Conversation 1895-1898, Preserved by his Studio Assistant Thomas Rooke* (London: John Murray, 1982), p .94.

as Perseus and St. George, the young Burne-Jones could beat his antagonist. Despite often being ill, however, he produced large and life- sized paintings in his later career; using a ladder to reach all areas of his canvas, painting must have required enormous physical exertion.

The painter was concerned too about the conservation of his paintings. Like the human body, paintings, were vulnerable in stark contrast to sculpture, owing to the potential for damage.[458] As Arscott suggests, a painting has an analogy with the human body, and the painter treated his works like fragile mortals.[459] Burne-Jones was aware of the vulnerability of his work. On the other hand, he might have also been aware of the fact that sculpture has superior attributes in term of its idealism and immortality. For him, paintings age as bodies do. Burne-Jones's admiration for the immortality of sculpture reflected an opposite to the condition of his body as it failed him in his life.

The Popularity of Pygmalion in the Victorian Period

In his writing, Winckelmann describes the effect that the aesthetic object has to elevate the viewer in the following way:

> In gazing upon this masterpiece of art, I forget all else, and I myself adopt an elevated stance, in order to be worthy of gazing upon it. My chest seems to

[458] "I know that moving works of art backwards and forwards in sending them to loan collections does them great damage; especially with regard to pictures, it is evident that the shaking of many journeys does mechanical injury by loosening the paint on the surface, . . ." in *Memorials*, Vol. II, p. 100.

[459] I am inspired by the discussion of Arscott that links the painter's concern with the fragility of painting with his delineation of the human body especially the skin. See Arscott, *William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones: Interlacings*, pp. 81-82.

> expand with veneration and to heave like those I have seen swollen as if by the spirit of prophecy, and I feel myself transported to Delos and to the lycian groves, places Apollo honoured with his presence—for my figure seems to take on life and movement, like Pygmalion's beauty.[460]

Winckelmann here fantasizes that the statue also responds to his desire, seeming to be brought to life, like the statue of Pygmalion. Winckelmann's writing with sensuous and psychological relationship to Greek sculpture, uncovers his highly sensitive observation that animates sculptural works into an entity of flesh. In fact, George Eliot is also susceptible to such a sense of power of materials, the divine powers of high art. While staying in Dresden, Germany, in 1858 she recollects the effect the work *The Madonna Cabinet* had upon her.

> I sat down on the sofa opposite the picture for an instant, but a sort of awe, as if I were suddenly in the living presence of some glorious being, made my heart swell too much for me to remain comfortably, and we hurried out of the room.[461]

Susceptible as she was to paintings, Eliot felt a sense of awe when encountering divine arts and experienced them as if she experienced the intensified emotion of a Pygmalion-like moment.

Like Pygmalion, Victorian male artists were obsessed with creating ideal female figures. The Pygmalion story is well known from *Ovid's Metamorphoses*: A sculptor, Pygmalion, despises the degraded women of his world and so begins to create a female statue from ivory. The sculptor falls in love with the sculpture and its perfect beauty. While the sculptor's desire to marry his creation increases, Venus,

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[460] *HAA*, p. 334.
[461] *The Journals*, p. 325.

understanding his wish, gives life to the statue, and they do indeed marry. The theme of Pygmalion was frequently adopted and reassessed in visual art, literature, and drama in the later nineteenth-century. G. F. Watts painted *The Wife of Pygmalion* (1868), Jean-Léon Gérôme painted *Pygmalion and Galatea* (1890) and in one of the biggest project of Burne-Jones's career, he completed a series of four paintings on the Pygmalion story, which was inspired by William Morris's writing 'The Pygmalion and Image' in *Earthly Paradise* (1868).[462] In the genre of poetry, Robert Buchanan wrote 'Pygmalion the Sculptor' in *Undertones* (1863), and Thomas Woolner, known as a Pre-Raphaelite sculptor, wrote 'Pygmalion' (1881). More significantly, the theme was particularly popular in the theatre, for example, William's Brough's 'Pygmalion; or the Statue Fair' was performed at the Royal Strand Theatre in 1867 and W. S. Gilbert's 'Pygmalion and Galatea' was first produced at the Haymarket Theatre in 1871.[463]

Just as images of Greek sculpture had influenced the later Victorian painting, the beautiful repose and solemnity of marble sculpture provided lessons in aesthetic beauty to stage actors and actresses. Gail Marshall, referring to William Cook's *The Elements of Dramatic Critics* (1775), noted that "the actor's art may be assisted by the study of antique forms: for men he recommends that attention be paid to *The Two Antinouses, The Hercules Farnese, The Apollo Belvedere, The Apollo De Medicis, The Caracalla, The Fighting*, and *Dying Gladiators*, and that women should study The *Venus De Medicis*, The *Venus De Calipaedia*, Diana, Flora, and The Graces" [464] In the art of theatrical performance, the sculpturesque manner was essentially required and

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[462] Jeffrey Richards, *The Ancient World on the Victorian and Edwardian Stage* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 66-67.
[463] Ibid., p. 73.
[464] Gail Marshall, *Actresses on the Victorian Stage: Feminine Performance and the Galatea Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), p. 39.

emulated, thereby the performers attempted to convey the blurred boundary of living presence and unrealistic materiality when acting on the stage without aiming to replicate reality.

Of all the nineteenth century actresses of that period, Emma Hamilton was particularly popular due to her statuesque style, and her likeness to classical antiquities was adopted by other actresses in the theatre.[465] The eminent French actress, Rachel Felix, was also known for her sculptural mood as documented by Rachel M. Brownstein: "(E)veryone compared Rachel to a marble statue – because of her pallor, and the sense of perhaps of her bony body's hardness; because she was haloed by the aura by the ancient Greeks. . ."[466] George Henry Lewes, also praised Felix in his piece titled, 'Rachel' in *On Actors and the Arts of Acting,* 1875. In line with this popular imitation of Greek sculpture by Emma Hamilton, white muslin and drapery became significant costumes with which to convey a feel of Greek sculpture-like figures. Young women admired the actress and copied her look by wearing white muslin. John Ruskin describes the effect of the use of drapery in Greek art in that "an Athenian always sets it to exhibit the action of the body, by flowing with it, over it, and from it, so as to illustrate of its form and gesture."[467] He maintains that Greek art used drapery for the sake of rendering the body and its motion. Theatrical costumes contributed to an increased sense of the beautiful bodily form as if trying to remind the audience of the nudity of Greek sculpture. Since the theatre was one of the major forms of entertainment accessible to any Victorian social class, actresses had an

[465] Ibid., p. 43.
[466] Cited in Ibid., p. 47. Marshall cited it from Rachel M. Brownstein, *Tragic Muse: Rachel of the Comédie Française* (New York: Knopf, 1993), p. 172.
[467] Cited in Richards, *The Ancient World on the Victorian and Edwardian Stage*, p. 76.

essential impact on the mind of audience members as new conceptions of aesthetic human forms blended with aesthetic objects.

The actress Helena Faucit, contemporary with Rachel Felix is also worth noting. On her performance as Hermione, the *Morning Post* in October of 1837 described her by saying that ", . . . art could scarcely give to marble a more noble and imposing station than she presented descending, and advancing forward a few paces, she looked still like marble in motion, like a beautiful piece of statuary that had just received the breath of life."[468] She also played Antigone in Dublin in 1845, and once in London and in Edinburgh.[469] For my purposes it is important to note that George Eliot was a close friend of the actress and often went to see her plays. In 1864, Eliot notes that she went to see Helena Faucit acting in *Cymbeline*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, and *Romeo and Juliet*.[470] Furthermore, Lewes recommended that Eliot should write a play for her, and she liked his suggestion.[471] Unfortunately, the play seems not to have been completed. Nonetheless, this detail of the record indicates that actresses, such as Faucit, who were compared to marble sculpture, held a considerable presence in Eliot's life.

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[468] Cited in Ibid., p. 69.

[469] Again she is compared to a Greek statue: 'Oh heavens! What a revelation of beauty! – forth stepped, waling in brightness, the most faultless of Grecian Marbles, Miss Helena Faucit as Antigone. What perfection of Athenian sculpture!' Cited in Marshall, *Actresses on the Victorian Stage,* p. 54.

[470] *Letters,* Vol. IV, p. 144.

[471] The notes from Lewes in 1864: "Monday 10th, worked at Middle Ages. In the evening we went to the Adelphi, having a private boy sent us to see Miss Bateman in Leah. While wondering at the badness of the piece and the success it has with the play going public, I thought of writing one for Helena Faucit and amused myself with sketching a plot. The idea laid hold of me, and during a sleepless night, I made out the skeleton of the whole five acts. In the morning, I suggested to Polly that she should do the piece. She rather liked the suggestion, and when I had written out the barest possible outline of my plot, I read it to her. She thought the subject a good one, and one that she could work out. So I wrote to Helena Faucit to arrange a meeting next Saturday that I might learn from her before Polly begins, whether she is prepared to return to the stage if a good play were ready for her." *Letters,* Vol. IV, p.132.

In *Daniel Deronda*, for example, the heroine Gwendolen Harleth wears a Greek dress and asks if she looks like Rachel Felix, as she admires "Rachelesque heroines".[472] She wants to present herself as a statue. When visiting Offendence where her cousins, Rex and Ann Gascoigne live, they enjoy playing charades and tableaux and even plan to invite guests to their performance of the *The Winter's Tale*. Gwendolen plays the part of the heroine, Hermione, just as Helena Faucit played the role.[473] The narrator describes the performance plan as follows: "The main source of doubt and retardation had been Gwendolen's desire to appear in her Greek dress. No word for a charade would occur to her either waking or dreaming that suited her purpose of getting a statuesque pose in this favourite costume."[474] As we have discussed regarding the figure of Gwendolen in the first chapter, she is self-consciously beautiful and thus enjoys being seen as an aesthetic sculpture. She regards her life as taking place on a dramatic stage and so performs like an actress in her real life,[475] thus Eliot emphasises Gwendolen's desire that the viewers recognise her not only as an art object but a significantly in the role of an actress viewed as a sculpture.

The invention of photography also contributed to the accessibility of Victorians to idealised forms. Pictures of naked humans contributed to the field of medical science, and artists started using them for life drawing practice, mainly for nude paintings. Photography of the nude also emulated figures of classical sculpture. In Oscar Gustar Rejlander's *Reclining Female Nudes*, *Reclining Female Draped and Penitence* (1857), and Louis-Jean-Baptiste Igout's image entitled *Académie No. E791*

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[472] *DD,* Chapters 6; 55; 59. See also Witemeyer, *George Eliot and the Visual Arts.*
[473] Marshall points out that Gwendolen bears resemblance to Helena Faucit. See Marshall, *Actresses on the Victorian Stage,* p. 81.
[474] *DD*, p. 59.
[475] Byerly, *Realism, Representation, and the Arts in Nineteenth-Century Literature*, p. 127.

(1870s), the compositions are very close to those of the classical nude paintings. Their non-narrative spaces lead viewers to a non-realistic, artificial realm. Draperies in these images also hint at Greek sculpture and Igout's image directly contrasts an actual small sculpture with the female body nearby. The posture of the female figure appears in the orthodox posture of the art of the nude with the weight on her right leg. In this photograph, because of the strong colour contrast between flesh and the dark background, the female figure absorbs much of the light successfully creating the appearance of a marble-like smooth surface. Naked female figures in the photographs were not necessarily rendered as realistic bodies; rather they were contrived so as to make the female body as inanimate and materially solid as in sculpture.

While the theme of Pygmalion was frequently adapted into plays, poetry, and paintings during the Victorian era,[476] there were significant alterations to the traditional plot. For example, in *Pygmalion and Galatea*, the play, written by W. S. Gilbert and first produced in 1871 at the Haymarket, even though Venus fuses life into the statue called Galatea, the statue returns into the solidified state in the end.[477] Additionally Pygmalion, in this play, is already married before creating the statue Galatea. The marital life of Pygmalion is thus threatened once the statue has become animated. However, he convinces himself of his true love for his wife, and Galatea returns then to her pedestal. This new Galatea mirrors an ideal figure created from a male point of view as being quiet and obedient to men just as a statue would be in its inanimate form. The plot also implies male anxieties about women and their ability to move outside of their domestic realm. As feminists have pointed out, the story of

[476] Richard Jenkyns notes that "the story of Pygmalion haunted the nineteenth-century imagination." See *Dignity and Decadence,* p. 115.
[477] Richards, *The Ancient World on the Victorian and Edwardian Stage*, pp. 73-74.

Pygmalion presents a man who sculpts a female figure according to his sexual desire and its fulfilment. Although the statue comes to life, it remains under the control of its male creator, and thus the living statue is still essentially immovable. The new twist on the traditional plot during the Victoria period indicates ambiguous views about the Victorian female ideal, or in other words, about whether woman should stay or move on from where they used to be—the domestic realm. Marshall maintains that "It is possible to see Victorian Pygmalion legends as responding to contemporary anxieties about women and their ability to 'metamorphose' into unprecedented professional and intellectual forms in the nineteenth century." [478]

Such anxiety is evident in the word view of Burne-Jones in which " 'Women ought to be locked up. In some place where we could get access to them but that they couldn't get out from.'"[479] Moreover, Joseph Kestner suggests that "the alteration from worship of women to fear of women" is seen in the paintings by Burne-Jones.[480] Indeed, Burne-Jones explicitly deals with the theme of Pygmalion from the 1860s. Thus the reinvention or reconfiguration of the Pygmalion myth encompasses a variety of perspectives on the metamorphosis of gender ideology that were prevalent during the turn of the late Victorian period. The section which follows thus considers the conception of the woman as an animated statuesque being in the text of Eliot and imagery of Burne-Jones.

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[478] Marshall, *Actresses on the Victorian Stage*, p. 24.
[479] Cited in Joseph Kestner 'Burne-Jones and Nineteenth- Century Fear of Women' in *Biography*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Spring, 1984, pp. 95-122), p. 111.
[480] Ibid., p. 104.

Elements of the Pygmalion Myth in *Middlemarch*

In *Middlemarch*, Eliot implicitly deploys elements of the Pygmalion myth not only by alluding to the imagery of sculpture but also by highlighting the phenomenon of being animated, and that of being turned into marble. As we have discussed in the earlier section, the metaphor of being frozen is prevalent in the novel, and I have compared the images described of some of the male characters being turned to stone with the sculptures of the Niobe and Laocoön. I would like to consider then the implication of Eliot's central female character, Dorothea Brooke, both as a marble statue and as a figure that becomes animated, in relation to the context of the Pygmalion myth. The analogy of *Middlemarch* to the Pygmalion myth has already been discussed. Richard Jenkyns interprets the novel as the story of Dorothea, playing the role of Pygmalion's image, brought to life by Ladislaw.[481] He implies that "the process of transition" attracts artists,[482] and the novel highlights the same point. In *Middlemarch*, Eliot especially emphasises the process of metamorphosis.

Ladislaw worships Dorothea as the divine and ideal woman, whereas Dorothea becomes animated, and her sexual desire is awakened, in the presence of Ladislaw. Yet I consider that the way in which Ladislaw worships Dorothea during the earlier stage of the text is implicitly hinted at the modern dilemma as to whether women should remain ignorant or not.

It can be seen that there are two phases to the worship of Dorothea by Ladislaw: In the first stage he idolises Dorothea as a divine object and in the second stage, after

[481] Jenkyns, *Dignity and Decadence*, p. 130.
[482] Ibid.

Dorothea becomes a widow, his emotion for her as a woman becomes more intensified. I will especially focus on the former stage of worship.

The way that Eliot describes the female body as being like the image of sculpture becomes more direct in *Middlemarch*. One of the most well-known examples of this concerns the statue of *Sleeping Ariadne* at the Vatican. This is the scene where Will Ladislaw and a German artist, Adolf Naumann, spot Dorothea:

> Quickness was ready at the call, and the two figures passed lightly along by the Meleager towards the hall where the reclining Ariadne, then called Cleopatra, lies in the marble voluptuousness of her beauty, the drapery folding around her with a petal-like ease and tenderness. They were just in time to see another figure standing against a pedestal near the reclining marble: a breathing blooming girl, whose form, not shamed by the Ariadne, was clad in Quakerish grey drapery; her long cloak, fastened at the neck, was thrown backward from her arms, and one beautiful ungloved hand pillowed her cheek, pushing somewhat backward the white beaver bonnet which made a sort of halo to her face around the simply braided dark-brown hair. She was not looking at the sculpture, probably not thinking of it: her large eyes were fixed dreamily on a streak of sunlight which fell across the floor.[483]

Like Ladislaw in front of the *Belvedere Torso*, Eliot juxtaposes Dorothea and the sculpture of Ariadne at the Vatican. In this scene, the reader as well as the viewers in the novel, Ladislaw and Naumann, do not yet know the fact that Dorothea is finding her marital life disappointing. The next chapter of the novel discloses that she has an argument with Casaubon during her honeymoon in Rome. Consequently, when Ladislaw and Naumann spot Dorothea, it is when she is visiting the museum after an argument, and her husband just left her for work. As Abigail S. Rischin points out, a

[483] *M*, p. 219.

honeymoon is a time when erotic desire is fulfilled.[484] Nevertheless, Casaubon is only engaged with his study, thus leaving Dorothea all alone. Therefore, although the mind of Dorothea has its fill of unquenched and repressed desire, Eliot hides her interior-world as Dorothea remains still in front of the statue.

Additionally, the novelist emphasises the way in which the two men observe this image of the heroine alongside the *Ariadne*. In observing Dorothea in front of the statue, German painter Naumann creates his own image of Dorothea, fantasising that she is an " 'antique form animated by Christian sentiment—a sort of Christian Antigone—and a sensuous force controlled by spiritual passion.' "[485] Invoking the Rossettian aesthetic we discussed in Chapter I, this German painter fuses elements of pagan and Christian ideas into his conception of the figure of Dorothea.[486] Yet he envisages that a sensuous force is locked up by spiritual force, thus idealising the immobilised sensuous force of her female interior world.

Ladislaw, on the other hand, disagrees with the observations on Dorothea by Naumann and argues instead: " 'As if a woman were a mere coloured superficies! You must wait for movement and tone. . . . they change from moment to moment."[487] The view of Ladislaw indicates his acknowledgement that female representations tend to

[484] Abigail S. Rischin, 'Beside the Reclining Statue: Ekphrasis, Narrative and Desire in Middlemarch,' in *PMLA*, Vol. 111, No. 5 (October, 1996, pp. 1121-1132), p. 1129.
[485] *M*, p. 221.
[486] Andrew Thompson suggests the resemblance between Adolf Naumann and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. See *George Eliot and Italy: Literary, Cultural and Political Influences from Dante to the Risorgimento* (Hampshire and London: Macmillan, 1998), p. 126.
[487] *M*, p. 222.

be statues. He stresses his idealism is that he wants to capture changeful and living beauty such as demonstrated in her voice. [488]

However, the more Ladislaw knows about Dorothea, the more Ladislaw views her as an idealised and divine entity, and he even becomes scared of contaminating her nature. This is emphasised by his viewing her innocence as a fragile material and desiring to preserve it.

> Will, we know, could not bear the thought of any flaw appearing in his crystal: he was at once exasperated and delighted by the calm freedom with which Dorothea looked at him and spoke to him, and there was something so exquisite in thinking of her just as she was, that he could not long for a change which must somehow change her. [489]

Although Ladislaw wishes to change Dorothea's habitual mind of moral asceticism, he wants her to remain fundamentally herself. For him, her uncontaminated innocence, as beautiful as a flawless crystal, increases the divinity of her presence. He is eager to view her presence rather than to be actively involved with her. This desire of his to preserve her purity without any human vanity or egoistic want may reflect the desire of Pygmalion, who admired his sculpture void of any fleshly human mind. Ladislaw enjoys worshipping the idealised Dorothea. As he fantasises about her, he explains that "when one sees a perfect woman, one never thinks of her attributes—one is conscious of her presence."[490] His sexual desire is camouflaged by his feeling of veneration for her. When Ladislaw introduces Dorothea to the painter Naumann and she is modelling for his painting, Ladislaw's mixed feelings are described as follows:

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[488] *M*, p 222.
[489] Ibid., p. 510.
[490] Ibid., p. 473.

> Will was divided between the inclination to fall at the Saint's feet and kiss her robe, and the temptation to knock Naumann down while he was adjusting her arm. All this was impudence and desecration, and he repented that he had brought her.[491]

In this scene, Dorothea is modelling for the painter; therefore her body is entirely in a state of repose, again like a statue and an aesthetic object. The jealousy of Ladislaw upon seeing the painter touch her arm shows a mixture of his sexual desire and his fanatical wish that she should be protected from any earthly contact. Her body is further sanctified in the passage by the words "impudence and desecration." Ladislaw's temptation to fall at her feet also suggests his obedience to this divine creature. On another occasion Ladislaw deliberately goes to church in order to meet Dorothea. He feels the special divinity of her presence: When he acknowledges her being in the same space, "Will felt his paralysis more complete. . . . it would be impossible for him to look towards Dorothea . . . This was what a man got by worshipping the sight of woman!"[492] Here is a mixture of awe and admiration for her, almost producing a Medusa-like power that paralyses him.

Eliot often compares the bodies of her female characters with sculpture. In the scene where Stephen Guest is about to kiss Maggie in *The Mill on the Floss*, Marshall points out that the description suggests a Pygmalion-like authority of control over women.[493]

> Stephen was mute; he was incapable of putting a sentence together, and Maggie bent her arm a little upward towards the large half-opened rose that had attracted her. Who has not felt the beauty of a woman's arm? The unspeakable suggestions of tenderness that lie in her dimpled elbow, and all the varied gently

[491] *M*, p. 249.
[492] Ibid., p. 513-4.
[493] Marshall, *Actresses on the Victorian Stage*, p. 15.

> lessening curves, down to the delicate wrist, which its tiniest, almost imperceptible nicks in the firm softness. A woman's arm touched the soul of a great sculptor two thousand years ago, so that he wrought an image of it for the Parthenon which moves us still as it clasps lovingly the timeworn marble of a headless trunk. Maggie's was such an arm as that, and it had the warm tints of life.[494]

Maggie's arm is overtly sexualized and materialised by the viewer, Stephen. Eliot transforms that sensuous fleshly arm into a sacred object by comparing it to a timeless marble sculpture. Here the Pygmalion tale is reversed: The female flesh is turned to stone by male worship, so the male viewer can admire it through a mixture of reverence and sexual desire. In a way, to objectify female flesh heightens its sensuality, since Pygmalion's sexual desire in fact does initially derive from the object he creates by himself, not in actual female flesh. The story of the assault on Praxiteles' statue of Aphrodite of Cnidos in *Natural History* by Pliny relates to the Pygmalion myth: A man is obsessed with the statue, and so he hides in the shrine one night, and secretly masturbates on the statue, and the statue gains a stain on its thigh. As Nead suggests one of the causes of the excitement of the man is partly "relocation of the work of art within the realm of the forbidden."[495] Female marble statues offer both spiritual and erotic properties. Sexual response to objects was, as I will further discuss in relation to Burne-Jones, increasingly considered in the realm of science.

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[494] *MF*, p. 395.
[495] Lynda Nead, *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 88.

Animation of Dorothea

The scene beside the sculpture of Sleeping Ariadne, in fact, is pregnant with two opposed metaphors of being turned to stone and being animated. I have maintained that the Ariadne statue parallels the immobilised desire of Dorothea. However, at the same time, Eliot indicates the transition from dormancy in the life of Dorothea. Indeed, the Ariadne statue conveys a sense of stillness, and yet her breast is bared and her arm is provocatively lifted representing her unfilled sexual desire. [Fig 21] Like Dorothea, Ariadne could not gain sexual satisfaction from her lover, Theseus, for Ariadne was deserted by him while she was sleeping on the island of Naxos. However, her calmness of sleep connotes the next sequence of the story, being rescued by Bacchus,[496] which also corresponds to Dorothea's life, her future second marriage to Ladislaw. The first marriage to Casaubon made Dorothea lifeless as if an object in his world of Casaubon. Casaubon not only fails to animate Dorothea but he also fails in his own study. He never realises that the subject of his research is almost a living thing constantly changing in formation, because of his lack of capacity of thought and feeling. Casaubon becomes as lifeless and statuesque as is his own work and Dorothea is also trapped in his antique world.

[496] Rischin notes that "Sleep would hardly seem to constitute such a suggestive turning point. But in Ariadne's sequence of events. Ariadne's slumber on the island of Naxos constitutes a transitional moment in her narrative, demonstrating her abandonment by one lover and her rescue by another. See 'Beside the Reclining Statue: Ekphrasis, Narrative and Desire in *Middlemarch,*' p. 1126.

Fig. 21

Sleeping Ariadne, The Vatican Museum. Photographed by Maho Sakoda.

For Dorothea the presence of Ladislaw then brings her a "source of greater freedom"[497] and "the mere chance of seeing Ladislaw occasionally was like a lunette opened in the wall of her prison."[498] After her husband's death, Dorothea increasingly longs for his presence: "her soul thirsted to see him."[499] When Dorothea learns about Casaubon's will, which covertly implies his disapproval of her marriage to Ladislaw, Eliot describes Dorothea's realisation of the possibility of a sexual relationship with the young man.

> Dorothea by this time had turned cold again, and now threw herself back helplessly in her chair. She might have compared her experience at that moment to the vague, alarmed consciousness that her life was taking one a new from, that she was undergoing *a metamorphosis* in which memory would not adjust itself to the stirring of new organs. Everything was changing its aspect; … Then again she was conscious of another change which also made her tremulous; it was a sudden yearning of heart towards Will Ladislaw.[500] [Italics Mine]

The scene in which her sexual desire is animated and mobilised represents Pygmalion's statue being brought to life. A sudden desire for the presence of Ladislaw occurs to her and her consciousness undergoes a metamorphosis. Referencing the Ariadne statue, the narrator suggestively describes that it was previously identified as Cleopatra in the time setting of the novel, when it was assumed to be the depiction of her death.[501] Thus the statue includes two different female representations, passive Ariadne and exotic voluptuous Cleopatra, seen by the Victorians as a femme fatale. In seeing this transition from the death of Cleopatra to the sleeping Ariadne, the statue was also animated from death. Thus Eliot's use of this marble statue in particular

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[497] *M*, p. 242.
[498] Ibid., p. 396.
[499] Ibid., p. 583.
[500] Ibid., p. 533.
[501] Winckelmann sees the statue as "sleeping nymphs or Venus," and notes that "people say that Cleopatra was found dead in a similar position." *HAA,* p. 330.

epitomises the transition of Dorothea. Eliot's desire is to articulate and consolidate the way in which one's emotion and moral consciousness undergo metamorphosis together with the metaphysical force of one's external world, by a certain solid and universal form. This metamorphosis is emphasised by the allusion of sculpture.

Burne-Jones's Pygmalion series

The series of Pygmalion paintings by Burne-Jones represent the embodiment of uncertainty. Whereas the painter charts the narrative precisely according to the myth, the viewer might remain uncertain about the story because the representations, both Pygmalion and the statue, appear to remain unanimated from the first sequence to the last scene: the sculptor is rendered as still and beautiful as the sculpture. In addition to this, Pygmalion is as feminine as his female statue, thus there is no clear gender boundary in the delineation of Pygmalion and the statue.[502] Furthermore, there is barely any sense of movement or vitality in the figures of the paintings, and seemingly the paintings disable the function of story-telling: we are not supposed to read the images, but we are invited to view and worship each of the forms in suspension as beautiful objects, as Pygmalion initially does with his statue. Like the inception of Pygmalion's desire towards the statue, Burne-Jones believes that art generates a real feeling. Thus the painting of Pygmalion by the artist potentially encompasses his essential idea of the relationship between art and reality. For him, art

[502] Andres, *The Pre-Raphaelite Art of the Victorian Novel*, p. 141.

functions as the projection of reality and truth, yet at the same time art should remain as art without any contamination of the social reality.

The intensity of the problem of the relationship between the art and reality is especially addressed in Burne-Jones' depiction of women. For the painter, women are the personification of art and Burne-Jones manifests the worship of women. Although the Victorian worship of women was traditionally described within the figures of the mother or wife, Burne-Jones does not often paint these figures. Burne-Jones's *Pygmalion and the Image* was commissioned in 1868 by Euphrosyne Cassavetti, whose daughter, Maria Theresia Zambaco, being the artist's lover, became a model for the Pygmalion's sculpture in the painting. This series of paintings were completed and displayed to public in 1877. As he spent almost ten years on the series, the image of the Pygmalion myth almost encapsulates the artist's introspective world. Martin Danahay observes that in the nineteenth century artists projected their illicit egos and narcissism by creating female representations.[503] Producing Pygmalion's sculpture, or any artefacts, could be regarded as an equivalent process to making one's double, in other words, the artists own idealised double is reflected in the aesthetic forms of female figures. As we have found, figures in Rossetti's paintings, like Burne-Jones's, prominently play the role of the artists' own reflections.[504]

While most of the images of Pygmalion in the Victorian era present the scene when Pygmalion finds the statue brought into life. Burne-Jones's images were, on the

[503] Martin, A. Danahay, 'Mirrors of Masculine Desire: Narcissus and Pygmalion in Victorian Representation' in *Victorian Poetry,* Vol. 32, No. 1 (Spring, 1994, pp. 35-54), p. 35.
[504] Ibid., p. 47.

other hand, inspired by the narrative of *The Earthy Paradise* by William Morris,[505] and the painter separates the narrative into four segments. In this series, what particularly attracts our attention is the depiction of the male sculptor. Burne-Jones does not only present the metamorphosis of the statue but also the sculptor's elusive emotional transition that corresponds to the metamorphosis of the statue. Burne-Jones's reconfiguration of the focus of the Pygmalion myth, thus, seems to be concerned with the creator's transitional interior worlds. Simeon Oberholzer conjectures that "the first two scenes, (*The Heart Desires* and *The Hand Refrains*), refer to Pygmalion's striving for an ideal state and an artistic objective. These and the fourth title (*The Soul Attains*) all emphasises the spiritual feelings of the protagonists." Thus Burne-Jones delineates an "abstract state of the soul in an allegorical dimension." [506]

In the first image of the series, *The Heart Desires* [Fig. 22], the painter represents Pygmalion as a melancholic, effeminate figure. The studio of Pygmalion is secluded and feels remote from society, while two female figures on the left suggest the separateness of the outside world. On the right, the sculpture of the Three Graces, symbolizing the traditional ideal beauty, is present in his studio and makes a reflection on the floor. Pygmalion contemplates these reflections as if they are the mirror image of himself. The artistic representation of idealised women interweaves with his own identity and the triumph of the beauty of the Three Graces becomes a symbol of the triumph of his own creation. The space of Pygmalion, in which he literally turns his

[505] Simon Oberholzer notes that "Burne-Jones developed the series of paintings for Euphrosyne Cassavetti from drawings that he had already produced in 1867 as illustrations for the planned publication of the Earthly Paradise series of poem by William Morris." Yet Oberholzer suggests that other literary sources including Ovid's *Metamorphosis* and a medieval French poem *Roman de la Rose* by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meuns also inspired Burne-Jones. 'Edward Burne-Jones's Pygmalion' in *Edward Burne-Jones: The Earthly Paradise*, pp. 69-70.
[506] Ibid., p. 70.

back on society, is occupied by these aesthetic sculptures and the reflection of the mirror, none of which are living things. This art studio encapsulates Pygmalion's self-absorbing, idealism, and the material world with which he surrounds himself.

In the second image, *The Hand Refrains* [Fig. 23], Pygmalion, faced with his sculpture from an awkward distance, appears to be hesitating, uncertain, confused and scared about continuing to work on it, rather than falling in love. He may be confused between reality and art confronting this most beautiful of objects. Again, in the composition the statue appears as his parallel. The naked statue, opposed to Pygmalion's fully covered body, could thus be regarded as mirroring and revealing his desire. The image of Pygmalion's sculpture, initially modelled on his lover Maria, therefore, may distil the artist's personal and illicit introspection. As Eliot's Ladislaw in *Middlemarch* feels scared of his crystal, Dorothea, acquiring a flaw, Burne-Jones's sculptor looks very concerned about his creation and does not seem to desire that the statue be brought into life, thus echoing the idea of the painter that I cited in the previous section: "Woman's shape is best in repose."

The desire to force women into suspension is also echoed by other nineteenth century novelists. Thomas Hardy's novels, *The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved* (1892) and *The Well-Beloved* (1897) resonate with the myth of Pygmalion.[507] Moreover it has been pointed out that the inspiration for these novels also came from the art of the Pre-Raphaelites.[508] The story is that a male sculptor Jocelyn Prieston worships

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[507] Jane Thomas, 'Introduction' to Thomas Hardy, *The Well-Beloved with The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved* (London: Wordsworth Classics, 1987), xx.
[508] Ibid. See also Andres's *The Art of Pre-Raphaelite of the Victorian Novels*; and Pulham's 'From Pygmalion to Persephone: Love, Art, Myth in Thomas Hardy's The Well-Beloved'; J.B. Bullen, *The Expressive Eye: Fiction and Perception in the Work of Thomas Hardy* (Cambridge: Clarendon, 1989).

Fig.22

Edward Burne-Jones, *Pygmalion and the Image: I. The Heart Desires* (1875-78), oil, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

Fig. 23

Edward Burne-Jones, *Pygmalion and the Image: II. The Hand Refrains* (1875-78), oil, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

three ideal women: The three generations of Avice Caro's family. His erotic and artistic desire to shape the Caro women in relation to the art of sculpture has been substantially discussed by Pulham. She points out that, unlike Pygmalion, Prieston wishes to inanimate and harden the women into a "durable form", thus the novels reflect not only elements of the Pygmalion myth but also the story of the Cnidian man's sexual act on the statue of Aphrodite.[509] Pulham argues that sexual arousal in relation to objects, "agalmatophilia," was under significant consideration from a medical point of view at the beginning of the development of sexology. For example, Havelock Ellis in *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (1905) notes that '"Pygmalionism, or falling in love with statues, is a rare form of erotomania found on the sense of vision and closely related to the allurement of beauty." [510] Hardy's novel thus draws attention to the protagonist's perverted desire and psychology incited by beautiful women in sculptural form.

Interestingly, Havelock Ellis reviewing Hardy's *The Jude's Obscure*(1895) in the *Westminster Review* draws a comparison to the art of Burne-Jones: "No one, who has once felt the charm of the dream-wrap faces which Mr. Burne-Jones loves to delineate, has cared that the artist should seek for fresh types of loveliness, and it is equally easy to be content with the type of womanhood which Mr. Hardy gives us in all its delicate variations."[511] Hardy in fact frequented the Grosvenor Gallery and was acquainted with Burne-Jones. Andres demonstrates the close affinity between the dream-worlds

[509]Patricia Pulham, 'From Pygmalion to Persephone: Love, Art, Myth in Thomas Hardy's "The Well-Beloved"'in *Victorian Review*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Fall, 2008, pp. 219-239), pp. 225-6.
[510] Cited in Ibid., p. 226.
[511] Cited in R. G. Cox, *Thomas Hardy the Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1970), p. 106.

created by Hardy and Burne-Jones.[512] The pair were both advocates of aestheticism. Byerly also asserts that Hardy believed that arts including painting, music, and architecture were "natural expressions of different kinds of truth." [513] As with Burne-Jones, the conflict between art and reality or the illusion of art as reality, is conveyed in the female figures in Hardy's writings. Prieston's desire in *The Well-Beloved* to materialise and aestheticise women as art shows an analogy to the Pygmalion myth as depicted by Burne-Jones.

However, I argue that there is another desire in Burne-Jones's Pygmalion series, a desire to join the world of art. In the last of the sequence of the images, *Soul Attains* [Fig. 24], although the statue is brought to life, she appears to remain marble.[514] Likewise, Pygmalion seems petrified and awestruck in front of his object of worship. He, by crouching down, shows his reverence to the statue, suggesting his submission to the aesthetic being; in other words, his soul is trapped by the statue. The composition bears resemblance to his *Beguiling of Merlin* in that the man sits while the woman stands, and the former looks up to the later. Like Merlin, who is entrapped by the magic of Nimue, Pygmalion seems entrapped by the beauty of Galatea. More importantly, what is uncanny in this last scene of the series is that the location of the pair in the composition is reversed from the previous sections: Now Pygmalion is placed on the right hand side and the statue is on the left. The living yet still seemingly cold sculpture occupies the space where the living man was previously depicted and Pygmalion comes to the side of the sculpture. This suggests that there is

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[512] Andres, *The Art of Pre-Raphaelite of the Victorian Novels.*
[513] Byerly, *Realism, Representation, and the Arts in Nineteenth-Century Literature,* p. 149.
[514] Danahay, 'Mirrors of Masculine Desire: Narcissus and Pygmalion in Victorian Representation' in *Victorian Poetry*, p. 48.

Fig 24

Edward Burne-Jones, *Pygmalion and the Image: IV. The Soul Attains* (1875-78), oil, Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery.

not only a transition in the statue, from the side of the material realm to the living realm, but also in Pygmalion, namely from the living realm to the material realm. This reversal indicates and enforces the unity of reality and art. Burne-Jones himself wished to enter the world of art: He drew a caricature of himself called *The Artist Attempting to Join the World of Art with Disastrous Result* (1883). In this picture, he depicts himself attempting to enter into the canvas in vain as his physical form comes out from the revere of the canvas. This drawing shows not that he has mistaken the realm of painting for the real world, but that the aesthetic objects of the artwork invite him to join them.

Briar Rose

The inanimate condition of the human figure becomes even more pronounced in the images of his *Briar Rose* series. All the figures are asleep having fallen under a spell while the briar in the background continuously grows. The painting contrasts the bodies in suspension with the other "body" of the briar in its dynamic movement. If we juxtapose the male group in the *Briar Wood* with the female group in the *Rose Bower*, they appear to be grouped into bronze and marble representations, particularly the princess and the prince. The initial image of the princess was painted in 1871 as a single figure. Her posture of this image shows a close resemblance to the sculpture of Ariadne at the Vatican. The princess sexually raises her right hand, and her body is erotically charged. In the *Rose Bower* [Fig. 25], her body lies heavily on a bed, which

acts like a pedestal, and compared to her rounded body in the earlier drawing, she has changed to a state of flatness and lifelessness; the white drapery and the mood of her deathly sleeping figure mirrors the image of a marble sculpture.

On the one hand, the prince, in the image of the male group, is the only figure who is awake [Fig. 26]. The appearance of the prince could symbolize the moment of change since his kiss given to the princess would break the spell. Nevertheless, the prince stands in repose as the other knights are sleeping besides him as if his time is suspended. Despite the fact that he is equipped with armour, a shield, and sword and thus ready to face danger to save the princess, his physical appearance is devoid of any muscular or vigorous attributes. The armour is simplified, again like a body suit, thus displaying his body particularly his beautiful legs. In the painting, the masculine suits of armour lose the functional significance and seem instead decorative attires to view. Each of the figures indeed appears to be in an aestheticised mood of contemplation and one of the figures slightly swings the right side of his hip, as in the Gilbert bronze statue, *Icarus*. The knights sleeping beside the prince lie flexibly over one another. Above them, their shields hang in the middle of the briar rose, highlighting the moment of suspension. The wild rose briar entangling the shields reminds us of the image in Leighton's *Athlete* coiled by a python and Burne-Jones's Perseus coiled by the sea-monster. Near the Prince's leg, the briar is coiling and tracing his body like a serpent. [515] Burne-Jones commented on the work saying that "I want it to stop with

[515] Arscott, *William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones: Interlacings*, p. 119.

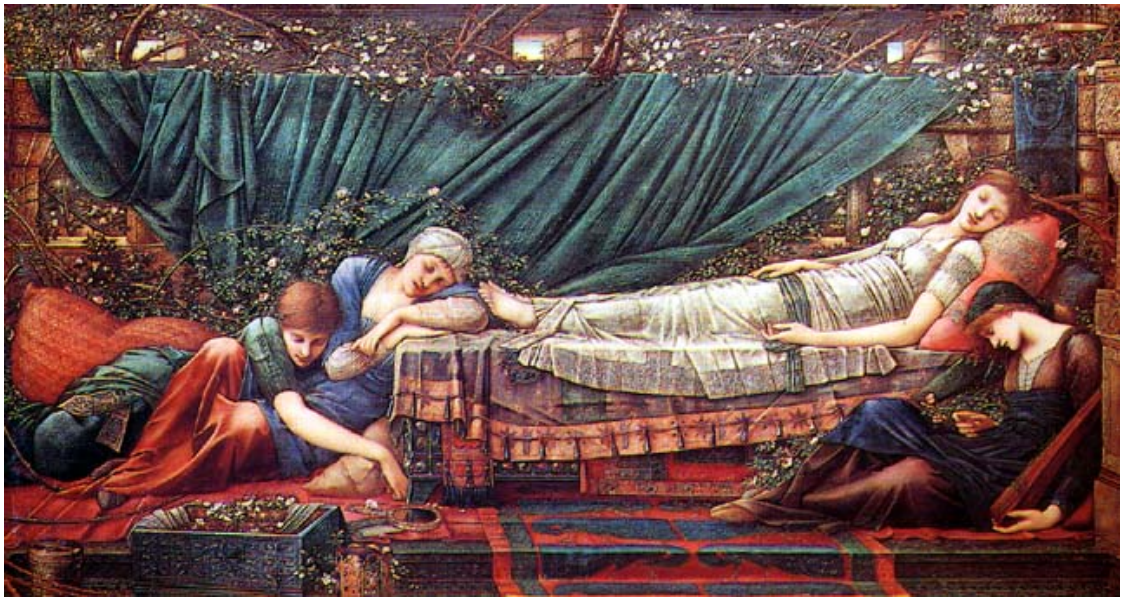

Fig.25

Edward Burne-Jones, *The Rose Bower* (1890), oil, Buscot Park.

Fig 26

Edward Burne-Jones, *The Briar Wood* (1890), oil, Buscot Park.

the Princess asleep and tell no more, to leave all the afterwards to the invention and the imagination of people, and tell them no more."[516] The story is artificially suspended by the painter's intentions, because for him there is no need to tell the entire story; the need instead is to present beautiful objects to contemplate, since the individual feelings aroused by the aesthetic provide the truth of the story for him. In his late career, Burne-Jones started to focus on the development of decorative art together with his colleague William Morris, and produced works away from the domain of fine art, including tapestries and stained glass. His overtly decorative representations in the *Briar Rose* series can thus be linked to his act of resurrecting a sheer sense of aesthetic pleasure in decorative forms.

Although Henry James, as mentioned earlier, critcised his paintings as being "flat," this flatness by Burne-Jones, together with his sculptural bodies, anticipates the metamorphosis in the world of art from realism to the next generation of aestheticism. Linda Nochlin has charted the transition whereby the truth gradually began to be conveyed and emphasised in the form of abstract, decorative art, colour, form, and flatness. [517] She takes Gauguin's "virtue of flatness as honesty" and the craze of Japanese flat graphic prints as examples of the evolution of realist representation. [518] The position of the art of Burne-Jones clearly contributes to such an account of modernity and the changing aspects of nineteenth century thought. And George Eliot could have influenced his construction of visual representations: Georgiana writes in her *Memorials* that: "When conversation fell one day in the studio upon Ladislaw taking art to Dorothea, in *Middlemarch*, he [Burne-Jones] commented "That's what we

[516] *Memorials Vol. II,* p. 195.
[517] Nochlin, *Realism*, p. 237.
[518] Ibid, p. 239.

like to do—it excites us and we say things we are pleased with ourselves for saying and that get fixed in our memory by that, so that we can tell them to the next day, and that fixes them the more and we can tell them to the next half dozen."[519]

The image of sculpture is effectively employed in both Eliot's and Burne-Jones's work. Eliot's uses the image of the body as sculpture as a link to human development. Ladislaw's and Dorothea's figures are compared to the sculptural body so as not to sexualize them overtly and by doing so they are instead elevated. Both Eliot and Burne-Jones share some aspects of the work of Winckelmann especially his sense that the young body is in constant movement. Yet Burne-Jones's sculpturesque figures highlight a more aesthetic rendering. His sculpturesque bodies, such as female figures represented as marble and male figures represented as bonze, significantly suggest the artist's admiration for antique sculpture that achieved the perfect ideal body and was able to outlive paintings. But as I demonstrated, he also uses the sculptural body to deliberately suspend a scene and this mysterious suspension uncovers a transition of aesthetic conception from realism to aestheticism.

[519] *Memorials,* p. 138.

Chapter IV

Childhood Memory and Representation of Children by George Eliot and Julia Margaret Cameron

A letter of 1869 by Emily Davies, the English campaigner for women's right to access University, describes a meeting with George Eliot and she notes that Eliot's own comment on her autobiographical novel *The Mill on the Floss* is that "everything is *softened*, as compared with real life. Her [Eliot's] own experience she said was worse."[Italics Mine][520] According to Eliot, real life and her real experience were sharper than the life depicted in the novel and the non-fictional past was elaborately softened by the adjustment of the Eliot's lens. The novelist also describes in the following way her feeling toward her works in her own letter of 1861 after the publication of *The Mill on the Floss*: "My books [*Adam Bede* and *The Mill on the Floss*] don't seem to belong to me after I have once written them; and I find myself delivering opinions about them as if I had nothing to do with them."[521] Although *The Mill on the Floss* as an autobiographical novel reflects of her childhood memory, it seems to have been transformed into impersonal artwork, which, Eliot feels, is not relevant to her. Moreover, I suggest the character of Maggie Tulliver, the protagonist who is believed

[520] *Letters*, Vol. VIII, p. 465.
[521] *Letters*, Vol. III, p. 374.

to portray Eliot's childhood, incorporates not only autobiographical, but also significant fictional elements that I wish to examine.[522] By reminiscing about her past through her fictional representations, the adult Eliot redefines her memories of youth while blending her perspectives from adulthood. In doing so, she manifests a particular conception of the past. She attempts to revitalise the sleeping memory, and encapsulate it in her early works.

In this chapter, I consider Eliot's "softening" adjustment of memory in relationship to her contemporary Julia Margaret Cameron's soft focus photography. Cameron employed sitters from her domestic life. The majority of the models in her photographs were her domestic servants, friends and family. However, her photography is very different from the predominant domestic family albums of the time. Cameron elevates reality into high art, to reflect the culmination of her artistic experience including elements of literature and art. Thus in this chapter, I discuss the ways in which non-fictional subjects are metamorphosed into the artistic and fictional realms of literature and art. I explore the ways in which Eliot sublimates her recollection of the past into the creation of representations in her novels that relate to visual images. I subsequently observe the ways in which Cameron visualises representations of the past or the imaginary past in photography. In order to do so, firstly, I outline the relationship between Eliot and photography. Secondly I investigate the way in which Eliot and Cameron create fictional representations in each of their works. Thirdly, I discuss the treatment of memory in *The Mill on the Floss* and child portraiture by Cameron before tackling the topic of death in relation to photography.

[522] Karin Lesnik-Oberstein points out that *The Mill on the Floss* is "the source for Eliot whose childhood is the source for the text, and the circularity itself, some minor 'distortions' aside, remains unexamined." See 'Holiday House: Grist to "The Mill on the Floss", or Childhood as Text' in *The Yearbook of English Studies*, Vol. 32 (2002, pp. 77-94), p. 81.

In *The Principles of Success in Literature* (1865), George Henry Lewes states that "[p]ersonal experience is the basis of all real literature."[523] Eliot shares this idea as is demonstrated in her early novels, especially in *The Mill on the Floss* – the reflection of Eliot's childhood. F. R. Leavis notes that "Maggie Tulliver is essentially identical with the young Mary Ann Evans we all know."[524] Also Peter Coveney describes the characters in Eliot's early novels as "both the creation of what she was, and more especially of what she might have been."[525] Indeed, as many critics have pointed out, the intense relationships the character Maggie has with her brother and father reflect the *author's* relation to *her* brother and father. Nonetheless, as mentioned at the beginning, Eliot does not delineate with what is generally considered the clarity of photographic rendering, instead the actual past is softened. In this regard, her early novels including *Adam Bede* that are often associated with personal experience bear a similarity to Cameron's photography. As noted earlier, Cameron selected her models from within her close circle and Mary Hillier, for example, was Cameron's parlour maid as well as her favourite sitter. Although Cameron often photographed her, Hillier was never presented in those of images in her real identity as a servant. Instead, the maid always posed as a Biblical or fictional character and thus Cameron blurred the reality of Hillier in her photographic work.

Carol Mavor points out that in photographing her servant as the Virgin Mary, Cameron blurred the hierarchical distinctions and altered the image of an archetypical

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[523] George Henry Lewes, *The Principles of Success in Literature,* ed. T. Sharper Knowlson (London: Walter Scott LTD, 1898), p. 24.
[524] Cited in Lesnik-Oberstein, 'Holiday House: Grist to "The Mill on the Floss", or Childhood as Text' in *The Yearbook of English Studies*, p. 81.
[525] Pater Coveney, *The Image of Childhood: The individual and Society: A Study of the Theme in English literature* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), p. 163.

female role in Victorian culture.[526] And Cameron only employed the beauty of the woman, not her social context as a maid, into her artistic creation. Standing in front of the image of Hillier, beautifully photographed in a composition typical of Italian Renaissance painting, the viewer would not imagine her hard life as a parlour maid. Meanwhile, since Cameron herself was a mother of five children and one adopted child, it may be natural to associate Cameron's dominant theme of maternal images with her own experience of motherhood. Indeed, I adhere to this view that she blends her experience as a mother into her photographic work. However, it raises a question as to why she did not photograph actual parings of mothers and babies in her work, instead of using fictional mothers cuddling unrelated infants. Carol Armstrong provides us with an intriguing view on this image: She observes that in the work, *The Shadow of the Cross* (1865), "Hillier represents Cameron's maternal photographic gaze as much as she poses its objects."[527] The photograph presents Hillier posed with Cameron's grandchild as if Hillier is the mother. It is remarkable that she chooses not to pair her daughter, the real mother, with the child. In addition to this element of fiction, the fact that technically some of her photographs are out of focus means the works do not necessarily convey exact images of the original people depicted. Both of these fictional facets of Cameron's photography remind us of Eliot's softening adjustment that blurs and alters reality within her fiction. Aspects of reality employed by both the novelist and the photographer are essentially transformed into the realm of art.

In Cameron's photographic work, her "out of focus" images still continue to provoke debate. Some critics underestimate her works that are out of focus as

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[526] Carol Mavor, *Pleasures Taken: Performances of Sexuality and Loss in Victorian Photographs* (Durham and London: Duke UP, 1995), p. 47.
[527] Carol Armstrong, 'Cupid's Pencil of Light: Julia Margaret Cameron, Maternalisation of Photography' in *October*, Vol. 76 (Spring, 1996, pp. 114-141), p. 137.

demonstrating a lack of technical skill. Other scholars such as Lindsay Smith have suggested that Cameron's indifference to the clarity of her photographs relates to her radical outlook and politics.[528] With regard to this controversy over blurred images, Cameron's own account is worth noting.

> [I] believe in other than mere conventional topographic photography – map-making and skeleton rendering of feature and form without that roundness and fullness of force and feature, that modelling of flesh and limb, which the focus I use only can give tho' called and condemned as 'out of focus'. What is focus and who has the right to say what focus is the legitimate focus? My aspirations are to enable photography and to secure it the character and uses of High Art by combing the real and the ideal and sacrificing nothing of Truth by all possible devotion to Poetry and beauty. [529]

By rhetorically questioning "what is focus?" Cameron defies a Victorian art tradition, especially in painting, that prioritises clear delineation.[530] Cameron implies a Victorian obsession with artistic fidelity that is demonstrated in "map-making and skeleton rendering" and she separates her work from these types of creations. Cameron clarifies her artistic goal: That is, to create high art by combining the real and ideal without distortion of original objects. Denying the traditional art techniques of clear delineation, the photographer aims to convey the idea of beauty based on her subjective responses. The motivation for her to making photographic portraits is not to produce autobiographical albums, which is the analogue of "map-making" or "skeleton rendering" that prioritise the documentation of the factual. She does not regard photography as a medium that constitutes the ultimate realism or a social document,

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[528]Lindsay Smith, *Politics of Focus: Women, Children and Nineteenth-Century Photography* (Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 1998).
[529] Cited in Helmut Gernsheim, *Julian Margaret Cameron: Her Life and Photographic Work* (London: Gordon Fraser, 1975), p. 14.
[530] Smith, *Politics of Focus*, p. 17.

but she tries to turn it into immortal art. Moreover, in photographing sitters, Cameron individualises the experience of her photographing process: In writing 'Annals of My Glass House', she explains that: " . . . when my focussing and coming to something which to my eye, was very beautiful, I stopped there instead of screwing on the lens to the more definite focus which all other photographers insist upon." [531] She differentiates herself from contemporary photographers by emphasising the contemplative, creative, and subjective moment when she discovers the beauty: She stops instead of screwing on the lens. The photographer appreciates her individual experience, which is culminating into an artistic creation. Therefore, Cameron's photographic portraiture that transforms individuals into High Art, her experiment of blending the real and ideal has much in common with the approach of Eliot's early writing.

George Eliot and Photography

Could we regard then Eliot's realist writing as a type of photographic social document of the nineteenth century? It is known that Eliot intensely studied, in advance, the subjects upon which she would write. Emily Davies confirms this reputation in her letter as follows:

> Whatever she[Eliot] has done, she has studied for. Before she began to write *The Mill on the Floss*, she had it all in her mind, and read about the Trent to

[531] Cited in Mike Weaver, *Julia Margaret Cameron 1815-1879* (London: Herbert Press, 1984), p. 155.

> make sure that the physical conditions of some English rivers were such as to make the inundation possible, and assured herself that the population in its neighbourhood was such as to justify her picture. [532]

Her rigorous research on the geography and physical conditions of the places that feature in her fiction yields a simulated experience that transforms her limited experience to realist art. For instance, *Adam Bede* was based on an actual meeting with Eliot's aunt; *Romola* was inspired by her trip to Florence, and her intense research into the life of Savonarola, and the period of history and places in which he lived. Her actual travels, visits, and personal experiences elevate her fiction into authentic presentations. In other words, her novel writing undergoes a significant process by which she reproduces her memories and living experiences in her fiction. In the discussion of contemporary painter William Holman Hunt, Smith regards Hunt's travel to the holy land in order to paint *The Scapegoat* (1854-6) as a form of "referential verification" which is "the need to approximate photography's condition of 'having been there' as part of a search for archaeological accuracy and authenticity in contemporary religious art."[533] Likewise, the research of Eliot of "having been there", or "having studied and having heard from the original sources" is transformed into the authenticity of her fictional referents. The preparation for her writing, as in Hunt's work, and her pursuit of empirical observation, is concomitant with the photographic authenticity of "having been there."

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[532] *Letters*, Vol. VIII, p. 466.

[533] Smith, *Victorian Photography, Painting and Poetry*, p. 96. Additionally, Eliot admired Hunt's paintings. She refers to his *The Hireling Shepherd* (1851) in her 'The Natural History of German Life'(1856) : "[H]e gave us a landscape of marvelous truthfulness, placed a pair of peasants in the foreground who were not much more real than the idyllic swains and damsels of our chimney ornament." *Essays,* p. 268.

It is worth charting Eliot's own photographic experiences in order to understand her ambiguous perspective on the new medium. Scholars have become increasingly interested in the relationship between the nineteenth century realist movement and the contemporary discourse of nineteenth century photography. When referring to the stance of Eliot, they tend to highlight her scepticism concerning photography. For example, Mike Weaver, in his discussion of Cameron, emphasises the following negative statement on photographic portraiture by the novelist: "[W]omen are seldom represented at all fairly by photography."[534] Likewise, Daniel A Novak regards Eliot as suspicious of photographic reliability, then argues that "Eliot ultimately links photography with a suspect form of fiction."[535] However, if one considers her correspondence, one cannot still conclude that Eliot simply disliked or failed to appreciate photography. On the contrary, as a viewer, she did appreciate a certain type of photograph.

In correspondence with Oscar Browning, her close friend and Eton master, Eliot expresses her enthusiasm about photographs in the following comments: "And the Greek photographs will be welcome too, especially with your commentary"; "Is it too late for me to ask you to fulfil your kind promise of sending me the Sicilian photographs?" [536] Also in her letter of 1879 to John Walter Cross, whom she would marry in the next year, she writes about lunch with her friends including Burne-Jones who brought her photographs. She describes them as "beautiful photographs which I

[534] Cited in Weaver, *Julia Margaret Cameron,* p. 141.
[535] Daniel Akiva Novak, *Realism, Photography, and Nineteenth Century Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008), p. 3.
[536] *Letters,* Vol. V, p. 376; *Letters*, Vol. VIII, p. 460.

may keep as long as I like, so your imagination may be enlarged with them whenever your feel inclined for self-culture, sweetness and light."[537]

More importantly, it is known that Eliot and Cameron admired each other's works as is evident in their correspondence and in Cameron's tribute to *Adam Bede* in her photography. Oscar Browning handed over some photographs by Cameron to Eliot, and in 17th January 1870, she expressed her gratitude in writing to the photographer that "I have long admired your works of this kind, but I am naturally disposed to think these [photographs Cameron sent] especially charming—above all the 'Golden Locks.'" [538] We should not disregard this correspondence between the novelist and the photographer. Although this is the only correspondence that has been discovered so far as evidence of a direct connection between the two women, it reveals that Eliot "long admired" Cameron's work, and it was Cameron who voluntarily approached and sent the photographs to the novelist. George Eliot spent her Christmas with Barbara Bodichon in Ryde, the Isle of Wight, in 1869.[539] During her stay, Eliot did not meet Cameron in person but it is likely that Cameron would have known that Eliot was on the island. Thereby it can be speculated that the photographer consciously took some photographs in order to present them to the novelist. Indeed, Eliot's letter to Cameron reads "The love which you have so prettily inscribed on the beautiful presents which you have sent me, is the more precious because it is given for the sake of my book."[540] I aim to entangle this intriguing and neglected strand knotted

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[537] *Letters*, Vol. VII, p. 234.
[538] *Letters,* Vol. V, p. 133. Unfortunately, the photography mentioned by her has not been identified.
[539] *Letters*, Vol. V, pp. 125-131. Eliot writes about her time on the Isle of Wight in her letters.
[540] Ibid., p. 133. Thus one of the photographs might have been referred to Eliot's novels. Also, interestingly, Cameron was keen on writing novels in the 1860s. Thus it could suggest that Cameron was conscious of female novelists such as George Eliot. However, concerning Cameron's

between Eliot and Cameron. This, I believe, further highlights the significant linkage between nineteenth century literature and photography.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti sent Eliot two sonnets 'Mary Magdalene' and 'Pandora,' with the photographs of his drawings of them together with a picture of 'Hamlet.' Eliot writes to the artist in 1870 as follows:

> I have had time now to dwell on the photographs. I am especially grateful to you for giving me the head marked June 1861: it is exquisite. But I am glad to possess every one of them…
>
> […]
>
> One is always liable to mistake prejudices for sufficient inductions, about types of head and face, as well as about all other things. I have some impressions—perhaps only prejudices dependent on the narrowness of my experience—about forms of eyebrow and their relation to passionate expression. It is possible that such a supposed relation has a real anatomical basis. But in many particulars facial expression is like the expression of hand-writing: the relations are too subtle and intricate to be detected, and only shallowness is confident … [541]

In the correspondence of 1870 above, Eliot was particularly delighted to find the date "1861" on the photographed drawings. The written date of 1861 allowed her to time travel between the present and that earlier date. While Eliot was not an avid consumer of photographs, she did view many and moreover confessed that she was glad to possess them. However, while referring to the picture of the head of Hamlet sent by Rossetti, she demonstrates her primary perspectives on visual images, such as human physiognomy and on visual perception. Eliot scrutinises the portrait in detail, linking the appearance of the eyebrow to a passionate inner expression. Yet, she becomes

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writing, Henry Taylor reports "I do not expect to be able to applaud Mrs. Cameron's work. Her genius (of which she has a great deal) is too profuse and redundant, not distinguishing between felicitous and infelicitous." Una Taylor, *Guests and Memories: Annals of a Seaside Villa* (Humphrey Milford: Oxford UP, 1924), p. 225.

[541] *Letters*, Vol. V, pp. 78-79.

less confident about her own analysis and indicates this by saying that she regards the impression as merely reliant on her narrow experience. What is significant in her statement then is that Eliot compares the visual representations of facial expressions to hand-writing: She suggests that one needs to read the image like the mysterious text but the impressions will be influenced by one's own experience or prejudice. The individuality of hand-writing is hardly reproducible; it yields an authentic as well as an individual presence, which cannot be represented. Although it can be copied by prints or photographs, its authenticity will be eliminated in the copied version. Copied versions of script fail to convey not only the subtleness of the graphical signature but also the authentic presence.

Eliot's conception of facial expression draws us into her scepticism concerning photographic portraiture. Photographic portraiture, for Eliot, could be equivalent to copied hand-writing, because it lacks authentic presence. It can be argued therefore that Eliot was mainly sceptical of photographic portraiture, regarding it as a shallow and static representation that might simplify a personal physiognomy. Yet, in fact, Eliot was sceptical about portraiture in general. Eliot regarded the technique as unable to convey the authenticity of individuals through their likenesses. Eliot was thus critical of the reliability of portraiture and its dangerous tendency to give rise to quick generalisations just as handwriting fails to produce its authentic signature when presented in copy.

Authentic Representations

Walter Benjamin's statement that "[i]n principle a work of art has always been reproducible" provides us with a significant viewpoint in considering the work of Eliot and Cameron.[542] In 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,' Benjamin notes the invention of photography created a unique authentic value for art works. With the technological advances that brought the woodcut print, lithography and photography came the possibility of making art reproducible; these crafts also yielded the new conceptual question as to the originality of a work of art. In the case of novels and photographs it is difficult for them to claim authenticity because both were invariably reproduced; the manuscript and the negative did not accompany the publication or exhibition. Eliot and Cameron might have been aware of the reproducibility of their art media. For the pair attempted to convey the authentic presence of the past or authentic and ephemeral moments of beauty in novels and photography. Eliot, with her creed of realism, and Cameron, with her aesthetic goal, desired to reanimate the genuine sense of time and space by encouraging the involvement of the reader's or viewer's own reflections.

When Frederick Denison Maurice wrote to Cameron that: "Had we such portraits of Shakespeare and of Milton, and we should know more of their own selves. We should have better commentaries on Hamlet and on Comus than we now possess."[543] The point that Maurice is addressing—the lack of a visual record of the great authors of the past—strikingly highlights a post-photographic conception. Maurice's comment

[542] Benjamin, *Illuminations*, p. 229.
[543] Cited in Helen Groth's *Victorian Photography and Literary Nostalgia* (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 2003), p. 159. Groth cited this from H. H. Hay Cameron's introduction to Anne Thackeray Ritchie, *Lord Tennyson and His Friends*, p. 7.

leads us to recognise the Victorians' new desire to keep visual records of individuals. His comments implicitly suggest the extent to which the Victorians held a high regard for visual records to aid reading comprehension and to develop their imaginations. For Victorians, developing their interpretation of literature, portraits of authors such as Shakespeare were almost as relevant as their hand-writing. Indeed, they started seeking such elements of authenticity not only in portrait but also in fictional literature.

For Eliot, however, the excessive contemporary obsession with seeking the originals for her fictional characters was a nuisance. When *Adam Bede*, was published, the author was confused by the reader's desire to identify the models of the fictional characters in the novel. The initial inspiration for the novel had come from the actual experiences of her Methodist aunt, Elizabeth Evans, the model for Dinah; this aunt did actually go to see a woman in prison who had been convicted for a child murder, like Hetty. However, Eliot avoided the simple identification of her aunt with Dinah in the novel, as she explains in the following way:

> As to my aunt's children or grandchildren saying, if they did say, that Dinah is a good portrait of my aunt—that is simply the vague easily satisfied notion imperfectly instructed people always have of portraits. It is not surprising that simple men and women without pretension to enlightened discrimination should think a generic resemblance constitutes a portrait, when we see the great public so accustomed to be delighted with *mis*-representations of life and character, which they accept as representations, that they are scandalized when art makes a nearer approach to truth.[544]

She here points out the potential danger of a "vague easily satisfied notion" that visual representations such as portraits provoke. According to the novelist, there is a risk of

[544] *Letters,* Vol. III, pp. 176-7.

scandal when art gets close to the truth, as people tend to mistake representations for originals. Eliot describes her aunt as a "totally different physical type from Dinah" and adds "[h]ow curious it seems to me that people should think Dinah's sermon, prayers, and speeches were *copied*—when they were written with hot tears, as they surged up in my own mind!"[545] The creation of Dinah, including her words, is for Eliot her original conception, despite the fact that she wrote tangentially about her aunt. Here she distinguishes the authentic representation from the copied one. The image of the character is not a "photographic" reproduction of her aunt. Visual images, Eliot believes, are so powerful and instantaneous in effect that they easily misdirect people and compromise their subjective memory, leading them effortlessly to view a fictional representation as something that they are familiar with from their own experience or subjective observation. As in Eliot's account, the close family of Eliot's aunt therefore actively see the resemblance in the fictional character Dinah by tracing back to and interweaving details from their own memory.

In her novel writing, Eliot does not aim to reproduce experience as a social document; nor does she wish to encourage collective feelings of nostalgia. She attempts to provide a new perception that transcends experiences and knowledge through fictional representations of common life. She states that "our social novels profess to represent the people as they are, and the unreality of their representations is a grave evil." [546] However, to merely document or imitate experience is not her ultimate purpose. Instead, her goal in the early novels is to reanimate personal experience and to seek dormant emotion or latent perception from the past. In the process of characterisation, Dinah metamorphoses from Eliot's aunt as the original

[545] *Letters*, Vol. III, pp. 175-6.
[546] *Essays*, p. 270.

blueprint to an authentic representation incorporating a blend of truth and Eliot's imagination.

Prior to scrutinising Cameron's photographic portraiture in detail, I begin considering her complex conception of photography as a blending of "art and truth." Since the invention of photography, it has been debatable as to whether its output can be regarded as the original, the representation of the original, or merely an imitation.[547] However, clearly Cameron regarded photography as original art and avoided demonstrating an imitation or copy of the original.

In *Two Essays*: *On the Sublime and Beautiful, and On Duelling* (1835), the husband of the photographer, Charles Hay Cameron, disregards art works concerned with imitation which, he argues, have no sign of the sublime nor beautiful quality, and simultaneously illusions such as trompe l'oeil "consist[s] in mistaking one thing for another." [548] According to him, the imitation that is realistically delineated in order to create an illusion distracts the viewer from perceiving the true pleasure that an artist means to convey. Charles Hay Cameron's ideas echo in Julia Cameron's work. She did not present photography in order to impress the viewer with those realistic or clear delineations that her contemporaries tended to value. Indeed, Cameron values simple compositions rather than elaborate settings.

When the portrait of Alfred Tennyson, entitled *The Dirty Monk* (1865), by Cameron was compared to the portrait by John Jabez Edwin Mayall, she describes a comparison made between the works in 'Annals of My Glass House':

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[547] Inspired by a discussion in Lindsay Smith's 'The Wont of Photography, or the Pleasure of Mimesis,' in Lusia Calè and Patrizia Di Bello, eds., *Illustrations, Optics and Objects in Nineteenth-century Literary and Visual Cultures* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 65-86.

[548] Charles Hay Cameron, *Two Essays: On the Sublime and Beautiful, and On Duelling* (London: Printed for private circulation, 1835), Accessed from British Library Online in 2013, pp. 23-5.

> The Laureate has since said of it [the portraiture] that he likes it better than any photograph that has been taken of him *except* one by Mayall; that '*except*' speaks for itself. The comparison seems too comical. It is rather like comparing one of Madame Tussaud's waxwork heads to one of Woolner's ideal heroic busts."[549]

Her ambiguous comment that the comparison to her rival Mayall is equivalent to that between sculpture and waxwork implicitly shows a celebration of the first, artistic representations that are conveyed while "sacrificing nothing of Truth." While Cameron suggests an interesting comparison between Madame Tussaud's waxwork heads and Thomas Woolner's sculpture, the photographer's main concern is to demonstrate the difference between an artistic representation as in sculpture, and a waxwork head that chiefly dwells on realistic imitation. Smith has demonstrated the close relationship between photography and sculpture, pointing out that the two media share similar qualities, in particular, the "potential to petrify animate form." The word "petrification," Smith argues, "is a more helpful metaphor than "freezing" to describe such a process since it harbours the potential for *physical transformation* in a more potent form . . ."[550][Italics Mine] For Cameron, as she describes in her poetry, "Who can best descry/How, swift, and subtle is the spell", beauty is too swift to be visible to our bare eyes.[551] Thus, by photographing, Cameron emphasises "the potential for physical transformation" of the beauty, and wishes to petrify it.[552] Indeed, when Cameron made a portrait of Thomas Carlyle, she inscribes it with the words: "Carlyle

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[549] Weaver, *Julia Margaret Cameron,* p. 157.
[550] Smith, 'The Wont of Photography, or the Pleasure of Mimesis,' in *Illustrations, Optics and Objects in Nineteenth-century Literary and Visual Cultures*, p. 67.
[551] 'On a Portrait' by Cameron cited in Weaver, *Julia Margaret Cameron,* p. 158.
[552] Weaver suggests that "Cameron perceived that photography could complete less well with painting than with sculpture or low-relief." *Julia Margaret Cameron,* p. 140.

like a rough block of Michelangelo's sculpture." [553] She believes art works by the great master Michelangelo embody immortal beauty and uses the word "immortalise" for the power of the photograph.[554] Immortalised beauty thus shares the idea of monumental sculpture that petrifies and outlives the original. Just as statues symbolise the past but live in the present, Cameron both petrifies and immortalises the beauty of originals by photographing them.

Cameron's transformation of original beauty into another original immortalised form is eminently shown in *Study after the Elgin Marbles* of 1867. [Fig 27] Following the advice of her mentor, George Frederic Watts, she studied the Elgin Marbles in the British Museum and made photographs, using her favourite models, Mary Hillier and Cylene Wilson. Cameron immortalised the greatness of the original artwork by using beautiful living women in photography. In her photograph, she emphasises the elegant movement of the robes. Yet unlike the dynamism of the original sculpture, the softness of her female bodies is pronounced through their soft bare arms, as the model on the left leans on the other. The dark curtain in the background also emphasises a sense of movement. Contrast between the robes that absorb light and the dark neutral background creates depth of field. Distinct from the neutrality seen in classical sculpture, the woman on the left hand side, Wilson, directly stares at the camera as if claiming her individuality. Although Cameron imitates the composition

[553] Joanne Lukitsh, *Julia Margaret Cameron* (London: Phaidon Press, 2006), p. 30.
[554] In the diary of William Allingham in 1867 July, he describes Cameron's attitude in the following way: "We go to Lymington together, she talking all the time. 'I want to do a large photograph of Tennyson and he o*bjects*! Says I make bags under his eyes—and Carlyle refuses to give me a sitting, he says it is a kind of *inferno*. The *greatest* men of the age (with strong emphasis) Sir John Herschel, Henry Taylor, Watts, say I have immortralised them, and these other men [Carlyle, Tennyson] object!" Cited in Helmut Gernsheim, *Julian Margaret Cameron: Her life and Photographic Work,* p. 35.

Fig 27

Julia Margaret Cameron, *Study After the Elgin Marble*, Second Version (1867), V&A.

of the Elgin Marbles, she emphasises more movement rather than the rigidity of the model furnished through the medium of sculpture. As a result, Cameron simultaneously petrifies and animates female beauty by photographing it. This artistic process echoes the process of Pygmalion's sculpture in which ideal beauty is petrified but simultaneously animated, from the representation to the real living thing.

Cameron's mentor, George Frederic Watts, says of portraiture "if a single figure, it should appear capable of action but performing none." [555] This view is epitomised by his work *The Wife of Pygmalion* [Fig. 28], which also echoes what Cameron tries to produce. Photographically rendering the sculpture of Pygmalion in his composition, Watts emphasises its stillness and motionlessness while ignoring the most dramatic sequence of the Pygmalion story in which the statue starts to achieve vitality. Watts's representation of the female sculpture conveys stillness, rather than the physical movement the sculpture is experiencing; Watts deliberately petrifies the moment of metamorphosis from the sculpture to the real woman by painting it as a bust portrait in his composition. However, this stillness produces a presentiment of what is to come that is completed by the viewer's imagination. In other words, the still portrait of Pygmalion's wife elicits the viewer's irresistible wish to see the moment of metamorphosis from a sculpture to a living being. Although Watts's Pygmalion is depicted as still, it encourages the viewer's imagination to be active. Therefore, the figure embodies both the movement of animation and the stillness of sculpture and the image, as the painter intimates is his desire, appears "capable of action."

[555] Quoted in Lewis Johnson, 'Pre-Raphaelitism: Personification, Portraiture,' in Marcia Pointon, ed., *Pre-Raphaelite Reviewed* (Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 1989, pp. 140-158), p. 150.

Fig. 28

George Frederic Watts, *The Wife of Pygmalion* (1868), oil, The Faringdon Collection Trust, Buscot Park.

Likewise, Cameron's photography attempts to produce a similar effect, as she writes to her friend John Herschel: "I have just been engaged in that which Mr. Watts has always been urging me to do. A Series of Life sized heads—they are not from the Life, but *to the Life*, and startle the eye with wonder & delight."[Italics Mine][556] What Cameron tried to achieve is a piece that is "to the life," and thus is able to capture and reanimate the sitter's beauty as an immortal beauty instead of a demonstration of petrified reproduction. According to Roland Barthes in *Camera Lucida*, photography highlights a specific moment when "I am neither subject nor object but a subject who feels he is becoming object."[557] Becoming an object therefore is, as Smith suggests, a physical transformation, or petrification. Petrification is the opposing phenomenon to that occurring with Pygmalion who turns the object into the subject. While Watts's *The Wife of Pygmalion* depicts the ambiguous moment of a figure as neither subject nor object but with an anticipation of coming into life. Cameron petrifies and reanimates the beauty of the subject by photographing it and thus conveying a subtle moment in which the subject becomes a living beauty transformed into an immortal life.

George Eliot parallels these processes in *The Mill on the Floss.* Although she was disappointed with the readers who assumed the figure of Dinah was an exact copy of her aunt, their opinions prove the fact that her representations appeared to be real enough to be plausibly non-fictional. In a way, then, the creation of fiction by Eliot is also like the work of Pygmalion: She creates authentic representations that achieve vitality in the imaginations of her readers. While Eliot and Cameron did not intend to

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[556] Quoted in Diane Waggoner 'From the Life: Portraiture in the 1860s' in Diane Waggoner, ed., *The Pre-Raphaelite Lens: British Photography and Painting, 1848-1875* (Surry and Lund Humphries: 2010, pp. 94-105), p. 100.

[557] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (London: Vintage Books, 2000), p. 14.

make illusions for their readers/the viewers, their fictional representations are the culmination of their passion and loyalty to the truth of their artistic imaginations.

Immortal Memory: *The Mill on the Floss* and Child Portraiture by Julia Margaret Cameron.

Eliot and Cameron were both born in the 1810s, growing up in a pre-photographic period. They shared the same generational experience of not having photography in childhood; the visual experience for that period of their lives around their childhood, chiefly relied on the possession of diaries, letters, and oral traditions, together with visual recall of their experiences and more spiritual and imaginative inner visions. While their early memories were not supported by a parent's photograph album, how was the conception of the past transformed after photography was announced in Paris in 1839?

As noted, Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* has been regarded as autobiographical and the novel seems to incorporate a photographic facet of dynamism, "this has been", from Barthes's *Camera Lucida*. Barthes's discussion of photography continues to be influential and he significantly links the invention of the technology with new ways of perceiving history. Photography made it possible for nineteenth century subjects to visually recall a certain time in the past. As the past became more accessible via photographic reproductions, according to Barthes, it became "as certain as the present" and thereby "a certificate of presence" with a significant subtext of "this has

been."[558] However, I argue that the notion of "a certificate of presence" is not necessarily relevant for a discussion of Cameron's work. What is unique about her photography is her emphasis on people who are dressing up to represent fictional characters from literature, or people from the long distant past from the pre-photographic world. Indeed, those subjects from the medieval period and fictional domain that Cameron studies in her photography were often unreachable for contemporary viewers.[559] Cameron photographs representations in the composition of traditional portraiture. Consequently, she disregards the certificate of presence of originals that, according to Barthes, is a prerequisite of the medium of photography. While highlighting non-fictional figures of the past, she prioritises the representation of beauty.

Cameron revives the beauty of the past by inviting the reader's imagination and reflection. A case in point is the portrait of *Sappho* (registered 1865), the Greek poet known for her romantic relationships with female lovers [Fig. 29]. The sitter, Mary Hillier, poses as Sappho. In this photographic portrait, Cameron highlights "a certification of the presence of beauty" rather than "a certification of the presence" *per se*. Using her usual model Hillier, she does not attempt to delineate Sappho realistically but to invite the viewer to observe her beauty in an abstract form. The composition bears a resemblance to silhouette work prevalent during the eighteenth century, and the work may be seen as the reverse of silhouette: for the profile is lit with a black background as opposed to a black silhouette with white back ground. The

[558] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, pp. 85-88.
[559] Amelia Scholtz, 'Photographs before Photography: Making Time in Tennyson's and Cameron's 'Idylls of Kings', in *Literature Interpretation Theory*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (2013, pp. 112-137). Scholtz observes that her photographic illustrations to Tennyson's *Idylls of the Kings* convey "the inaccessibility of the past by destabilizing any sense of a definite moment that actually occurred." p. 129.

profile of Sappho is made more clearly focused than her body. As in the traditional silhouette, the image emphasises its representational elements through shadow instead of delineating a detailed figure close to the original. Cameron is also less conscious of highlighting the three dimensionality of the scene by placing the profile against a dark background. Like Watts' *The Wife of Pygmalion*, Cameron's Sappho is not shown in action. The figure completely ignores the viewer as if there is a barrier between the viewer and herself; as Scholtz points out, some of the figures in Cameron's photography deny communication with the viewer.[560] By emphasising the object's stillness, Cameron invites the viewer to complete Sappho's figure through their imagination while highlighting the abstraction of its aesthetic form. The profile composition also reveals Cameron's wish to deny the viewer the expectation that a photograph will depict everything with clear delineation. As Cameron writes: "I longed to arrest all beauty that came before me," the image of the poet Sappho from an inaccessible past is concomitant with the realisation that her artistic conception of her beauty is immortal.[561] Cameron prevents her model from appearing to be merely acting the part of Sappho, and tries to convey the beauty of the past through a modern instance of beauty. By employing the traditional composition of portraiture, Cameron combines elements of traditional art with an imaginary past. The artist attempts to convince the viewer of the artistic creativity of photography that allows the imagination to revitalise the beauty of the past.

[560] Scholtz, 'Photographs before Photography: Making time in Tennyson's and Cameron's Idylls of Kings' in *Literature Interpretation Theory*, p. 115.
[561] Cited in Weaver, *Julia Margaret Cameron*, p. 155.

Fig. 29

Julia Margaret Cameron, *Sappho* (1865), wet collodion glass negative, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Memory is one of the most discussed themes across a variety of fields of endeavour in the nineteenth century, including science, philosophy, art and literature. The debate on the relationship between visual memories and artists is, especially relevant here. John Ruskin and George Henry Lewes discussed the relationship between memories and imagination, and attributed them to morality. Ruskin praising J. M. W. Turner's distinguished visual memory, maintained that "grasp of memory seems to me the root of its greatness," and he stated that "the most accurate and truth telling faculty which the human mind possesses" lead to great human imagination.[562] For landscape painters such as Turner it was necessary to finish their subjects in their studios after observing and sketching outdoors. Thus the ability to preserve these faithful visual memories played a key part in the development of their artistic creations. Ruskin criticised false observations that accompanied selfish individualism and vanity, and said of Turner that: "He never seems to have gone back to a place to look at it again, but, as he gained power, to have painted and repainted it as first seen, associating with it certain new thoughts or new knowledge but never shaking the central pillar of the old image."[563] This observation eminently influenced Eliot's novel writing. Additionally, her novels contain new thoughts and knowledge of the author while "never shaking the central pillar of the old image."

Meanwhile, Lewes, in *The Principles of Success in Literature*, refers to Ruskin's statement on Turner's accurate memory in order to demonstrate his own conception of memory.[564] He observes the importance of harmonising memory between the past and present, since one's memory continues to live in a different form while blending

[562] *Ruskin*, Vol. VI, p. 44.
[563] Ibid., p. 42.
[564] Lewes, *The Principles of Success in Literature*, p. 77.

the present experiences and imaginative forms. A vivid remembrance, he argues, even if it is prosaic, can yield aesthetic visions that are crucial for artists. He explains that:

> Genius is rarely able to give any account of its own processes. But those who have had ample opportunities of intimately knowing the growth of works in the minds of artists, will bear me out in saying that a vivid memory supplies the elements from a thousand different sources, most of which are quite beyond the power of localisation—the experience of yesterday being strangely intermingled with the dim suggestions of early years, the tones heard in childhood sounding through the diapason of sorrowing maturity; and all these kaleidoscopic fragments are recomposed into images that seem to have corresponding reality of their own.[565]

One's memory seems scattered and constantly changing, yet, it can be reunited into a harmonious form by undergoing the reformation of kaleidoscopic fragments. Lewes suggests an inevitable linkage between the present and past. The rooted memory continuously recomposes its shapes and essence in correspondence to the present. In another nineteenth century comment on memory, Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1822) compares having memories within the human brain to writing on a vellum, palimpsest.[566] He explains that:

> Everlasting layers of ideas, images, feeling, have fallen upon your brain softly as light. Each succession has seemed to bury all that went before. And yet in reality not one has been extinguished …. [567]
>
> … Yes reader, countless are the mysterious handwritings of grief or joy which have inscribed themselves successively upon the palimpsest of your brain; . . . They [memories] are not dead, but sleeping." [568]

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[565] Ibid., p. 78.
[566] I appreciate the suggestion of Lindsay Smith with regard to this subject.
[567] Thomas De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium Eater and Other Writings,* ed. Barry Milligan (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 150. Interestingly, Eliot compares John Ruskin's writing to De Quincey's in her review of Ruskin's *Modern Painters III*. See *George Eliot: Selected Essays, Poems and Other Writings*, p. 369.
[568] De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium Eater,* p. 152.

Memories, according to the philosopher, are "immortal impresses"[569]: They are stamped forever in our mind and consist of a number of layers, and more importantly can be reactivated again and again. Both Lewes and De Quincey discuss the revitalisation of memory. Childhood memories remain, but sleeping, and are eventually awakened with a different view. Adults tend to interpret and edit the memory of their childhood subjectively for their own purpose and as memories are edited they continue to be transformed. This is the point Eliot explains in her early novels, namely a projection of the kaleidoscopic formation of memory consisting of fragments of real experience and imagination.

In *The Mill on the Floss*, a living memory of childhood that significantly affects life is emphasised through Maggie. For Maggie, childhood memory is immortal but causes her suffering, especially, in relation to her friendship with Philip Wakem, whom she has known since childhood. The two are forcibly separated in their childhood due to a lawsuit between their parents, and they have a reunion later as adults. Maggie's platonic affection for Philip, despite the fact that he wishes to have a romantic relationship with her, is deeply rooted in her love of him in her childhood memory: The narrator describes "[h]er tranquil, tender affection for Philip, with its root deep down in her childhood, and its memories of long quiet talk confirming by distinct successive impressions the first instinctive bias . . ."[570] The bonds of friendship that Maggie feels towards Philip have not been extinguished since her childhood. However, she suffers from the fact that she cannot embrace his romantic love, because the grown-up Maggie idealises and protects her childhood, disconnecting her adult self from her child self. For her, childhood is an idealised space to which the adult Maggie cannot

[569] Ibid.
[570] *MF*, p. 410.

return, and Philip becomes the personification of her childhood. Moreover, after the loss of her father's lawsuit, which brings economic crisis upon the family, she is inspired by the idea of asceticism; this conviction prohibits her from indulging in pleasure and as a consequence she restricts meetings with Philip. Maggie embraces a living memory of childhood, but it is subjected to the interpretation of her adult self. In other words, her new knowledge in adulthood, through the veil of asceticism, transforms her interpretation of childhood into an idealised and inaccessible place.

In the novel, through the portrayal of the Tullivers, Eliot describes the ways in which one's fragment of memory is evoked and affects emotion. Their memories exist at the heart of their lives, in their home and amongst their belongings so for example, when the loss of their mill makes the family sell their possessions, Mrs. Tulliver laments the auctioning of them since material items such as her china, linen and teapot evoke a recollection of the past. She explains her association of memories in the following ways; "to think o' my chany being sold i' that way—and I bought it when I was married, just as you did yours"[571]; ". . . there's the linen I spun, and I thought when Tom was born—I thought one o' the first things when he was lying i' the cradle,"[572]; "my teapot as I bought when I was married, and to think of its being scratched, and set before the travellers and folks, and my letters on it—see here, E. D."[573] The china, linen and teapot represent the time of her maidenhood or the earlier marital life of Mrs. Tulliver, that is before Mr. Tulliver's lawsuit with the Mill occurred. Mrs. Tulliver's memory is scattered everywhere in domesticity. Her attachment to her teapot bears the idealised recollection that she does not want it to be "scratched." Her

[571] *MF*, p. 209.
[572] Ibid., p. 210.
[573] Ibid., p. 213. "E. D" are her initials in maidenhood, as Elizabeth Dean.

initials in maidenhood, E. D., that are now a certificate of her happy maidenhood bears the imprint of the memory of "this has been." Her memory coexists with these domestic artefacts such that the act of selling an item is, for her, as threatening as losing her memory. Her memory depends on these commodities, which reveals her materialistic character and also an aspect of narrow-mindedness in that she only lives in the idealised period of her life. Eliot highlights Mrs Tulliver's shallowness by indicating that her memories live in her belongings, not within interior visions. Such a view thus echoes Eliot's criticism of photographic portraiture as an incomplete materialisation and visualisation of people in the past. Visual memory had started to rely on such materials, including photography and as Eliot writes in her letter to Charles Ritter in 1877 : " I have so keen a memory of faces that the sun-picture is less complete than the remembered image."[574] Proud of the accuracy of memories imprinted and still alive in her soul, Eliot is concomitantly unimpressed with the static image of photograph.

Referring to portraiture, Eliot further questions "[h]ow can a thing which is always the same, be an adequate representation of a living being who is always varying?"[575] This comment epitomises her scepticism about the inaccuracy of likenesses and her awareness of the complexity of visualising a person's exterior and interior accurately. As her statement above demonstrates, what Eliot intended to demonstrate in her work is not only the outward appearance of living but also the interior, that is the "living memory" in the mind. Lewes, in *The Principles* of *Success in Literature,* criticises the mundane tendency of literature of the time in the following way: "Artists have become photographers and have turned the camera upon the

[574] *Letters*, Vol. VI, p. 386.
[575] *Letters*, Vol. V, p. 97.

vulgarities of life, instead of representing the more impassioned movement of life."[576] Unlike a static image within a photograph, literature, according to Lewes, needs "impassioned movement." Likewise, Eliot aims to sublimate her living memory of childhood in her fiction.

Cameron would have agreed with Eliot's claim that "[h]ow can a thing which is always the same, be an adequate representation of a living being who is always varying?" And, as we have found, she attempted to convey the fleeting human expressions, especially beauty, through her photographic portraiture. In her poem 'On a Portrait,' she writes; "Oh, mystery of Beauty! Who can tell/ Thy mighty influence? Who can best descry/ How secret, swift, and subtle is the spell/ Wherein the music of thy voice doth lie." [577] Cameron's photographic portraiture invites the viewer to imprint the ever changing beauty of its sitters into their memories: Her close-shot compositions especially present the swift and subtle moment. The works of Cameron reveal the secret of beauty that tends to remain unnoticed by the naked eye. The beauty to which she turns her camera is that which she recognises above as moving swiftly as a living being. Whereas George Eliot distils her non-fictional past into fictional characters, Cameron reconstructs an imaginary past in photography, via real people.

In "Annals of My Glass House", Cameron states:

> … from the first moment I handled my lens with a tender ardour, and *it has become to me as a living thing*, with voice and *memory* and creative vigour. . . I

[576] Lewes, *The Principles of Success in Literature,* p. 26.
[577] Cited in Weaver, *Julia Margaret Cameron*, p. 158.

> longed to arrest all beauty that came before me, and at length the longing has been satisfied.[578] [Italics mine]

Why does she describe the machine as "a living thing" with "memory"? In so doing, Cameron elevates photography as a new potential medium for artistic creation rather than as a new technological apparatus. Moreover, the idea of the camera as a living thing "with memory" differentiates the medium from a mere means of recording images. Cameron's longing to capture all beauty can be translated as a desire to remember ephemeral moments of the past in our living memory. Moreover, photography offered the Victorian a reassurance of the connection to the past, ideas of nostalgia following the invention of photography must have undergone a change. Scholtz's argument regarding the concept of reconstruction of an inaccessible past provides us a means by which to observe the ways in which Cameron recreates the pre-photographic past of Tennyson's poetic worlds. Focusing on the illustrations for Tennyson's poem, *Idylls of the Kings* (1859), Scholtz suggests that Cameron and Tennyson rendered the Arthurian past as one already lost and inaccessible to viewers.[579] Therefore, the photography of Cameron made the Victorians more cognisant of what was absent or what they had lost, rather than of the present. Simultaneously, Cameron's photographs reassured her viewers that what they had lost still continued to live in their memory.

Before addressing the idea of living memory in Eliot and Cameron, I demonstrate further the point that Cameron shares Eliot's idea that a living thing always varies by

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[578] 'Annals of My Glass House' written in 1874 and published in *Photographic Journal* LI. The Quotation is cited in Weaver, *Julia Margaret Cameron*, p. 154.

[579] Scholtz, 'Photographs before Photography: Making time in Tennyson's and Cameron's Idylls of Kings' in *Literature Interpretation Theory.*

scrutinising portraits of Kate Keown. The children of Thomas Keown, a Royal Artilleryman stationed at the Isle of Wight, were significant models for Cameron's child studies. The eldest, Kate Keown, was especially essential to her portraiture. The earliest portrait of Keown, dated 1866 when she was about nine years old, is photographed in a close-up manner; the girl directly stares at the viewer but not self-consciously and her unformed face is emphasised. Indeed, the shadow on the child's face indicates the three-dimensionality of a sculptural form. Also the out of focus effect anticipates the passage of time during which the child will grow up, and symbolises her ephemeral time as a little girl. The shadow half-covering the child's face also suggests the adult's recollection of their childhood as somewhat blurred.

Cameron was interested in the under-developed faces of children and their changefulness and this is especially implied in *Circe; "Who knows not Circe Daughter of the Sun"* [Fig. 30], a portrait of Kate of 1866. Circe, in Homer's *Odyssey*, is known as the sorceress who can transform humans into animals by administering a potion. In spite of this malevolent aspect, Cameron's Circe displays an innocent look and does not hint at the character's future evilness. But the viewer with literary knowledge of *The Odyssey* may go back and forth through time between Circe's innocent figure in childhood and her seductive figure in adulthood. Cameron's Circe with her innocent face captured at an unspecific time evokes a certain moment of her future in which she will transform people into animals. The portrait implies simultaneously that she herself will have undergone a transformation from a girl to a seductive woman.

Fig 30

Julia Margaret Cameron*, Circe; "Who knows not Circe Daughter of the Sun"* (1865) wet collodion and glass negative, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Although Cameron's mentors are chiefly known as Watts and Dante Gabriel Rossetti,[580] the photographer shares a similar conception of child portraiture to that of John Everett Millais. Millais produced a number of child portraits, but unlike Cameron's close up style, the painter continued to use the traditional style in depicting the whole of the child figure. What the photographer and the painter have in common is that the facial expressions of their subjects are reduced: Both believed the faces of children to be the most beautiful. Millais explains that:

> The only head you could paint to be considered beautiful by everybody would be the face of a little girl about eight years old . . . With years, features become so much more decided, expressive, through the development of character, that they admit of more or less appreciation . . . A child represents beauty more in the abstract . . . "[581]

The unformed faces of children thus implicitly suggest further metamorphosis and according to Millais, the unformed faces of girls are particularly valuable. In one of his notable child studies, *Autumn Leaves* of 1855-6, the neutral faces of girls anticipate their transformations from childhood to maidenhood, whereas the fallen leaves connote the end of childhood and create a melancholic mood. The fallen and coloured leaves rhetorically signify transformation over time, and declare the end of a certain stage of their lives. The painting invites the viewer to anticipate their inevitable passage of the girls to womanhood in the future.

Like Millais, Cameron treats child faces as aesthetic ones whose neutral faces anticipate metamorphosis. In photography, having a child subject required a certain

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[580] The relationship between Cameron and Rossetti is discussed in Joanne Lukitsh's ' "Like a Lionardo": Exchanges between Julian Margaret Cameron and the Rossetti Brothers' in Diane Waggoner, ed. *The Pre-Raphaelite Lens*, pp. 134-145.

[581] Cited in Malcom Warner, 'Portraits of Children: The Pathos of Innocence' in Peter Funnel, Malcolm Warner, Kate Flint, H. G. G. Matthew and Leonée Ormond, eds., *Millais Portraits* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1999), pp. 105- 135.

skill in the nineteenth century, as the children had to be kept still during long exposure times. Although the duration of the long exposure had been improved by the 1860s, the wet collodion process that Cameron used still required several seconds to complete the exposure. In *The Photographic Journal* of 1864, A. H. Wall states that it is difficult to capture the prettiness of children in photography because "we treat our child sitters just as we treat our grown-up sitter" and argues that "all the more expressive and characteristic features of child life, the suggestions of continually changing position, expression, feeling, and desire, are put aside in favour of that rigidity of pose and expression of restraint and unhappiness which, in a child, is of all things the most uncomfortable thing to witness."[582] In spite of this direction, Cameron aimed to capture not childish expressions but a child's changeable beauty from an adult's point of view. She treats children's beauty as equivalent to that of her more mature subjects.

Cameron deliberately photographs Kate Keown in a different way as the girl grows up. The later photograph taken in 1867 shows Kate reading a book and while her childish looks still remain, she is absorbed in the act of reading. Reducing the composition into a simple setting, Cameron presents her in a simple robe in front of a blurred dark background. In doing so, the photographer focuses fully on the relationship between Kate and reading. The act of reading indicates her involvement in another world and an increase in her knowledge. She ignores the viewer and seems to be reflective within her own world. There is a little distance created between the Kate of 1867 and the viewer. However, Kate becomes completely unreachable for the

[582] *The Photographic Journal,* Vol. II (London: Henry Greenwood), p. 150.

viewer in the last of Cameron's photographs of her entitled *The Twilight Hour* of 1874. [Fig. 31] This work refers directly to Eliot's novel *Adam Bede*, and Kate poses as Hetty with an unknown man as Adam. Kate's age, presumably about 17 years old when this photograph was taken, is close to that of Hetty. In the novel, Hetty is a seductive and self-conscious beauty yet will face the personal tragedy of becoming a fallen woman. Cameron inscribes the following quotation to this work:

> And always when Adam stayed away for several weeks from the Hall Farm, and otherwise made some show of resistance to his passion as a foolish one, Hetty took care to entice him back in the net by little airs of meekness and timidity, as if she were in trouble at his neglect. But as to marrying Adam, that was a very different affair![583]

By quoting this part of Eliot's novel, Cameron emphasises the seductive elements of Hetty. This self-centred character enjoys the fact that Adam becomes a slave to her beauty, despite the fact that she is meanwhile flirting with Captain Arthur Donnithorne. In the photograph, although the pair sit close to each other, Kate seems reluctant to look into the man's eyes, and the man also timidly averts his eyes from hers. One might presume that the Victorian young lady and man felt shy in posing so closely together for Cameron's camera. The awkward direction of their faces and eyes eminently reflects the intense relationship between Hetty and Adam in the novel: Hetty is fantasising about the other man while Adam falls in love with her. Unlike the close-up portrait of Kate in childhood, Kate appears at a deeper perspective in this later composition. The distance therefore illuminates the fact that she has grown up physically as well as mentally to the point where she is posing with a man in a romantic

[583] *AB*, p. 84.

Fig.31

Julia Margaret Cameron, *The Twilight Hour* (1874), wet collodion glass negative, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

setting. Furthermore, the composition provides the viewer with a voyeuristic viewpoint as if we secretly see the courtship of the young couple. In the scene where Adam visits Hetty at Hall Farm, he looks for her while walking through a bushy maze-like garden, and he is delighted to hear her voice from somewhere, and the description is as follows: "He could see there was a large basket at the end of the row: Hetty would not be far off, and Adam already felt as if she were looking at him."[584] Expectation of the female gaze is equally apparent in the photograph. The voyeuristic angle of the camera appears gendered with a male point of view; the viewer enjoys seeing the beautiful lady secretly. Therefore, compared to the direct stare and close up composition in the portraits taken of her in childhood in the 1860s, the last photograph of Kate in the 1870s shows a great deal of change. In *The Mill on the Floss* by Eliot, the narrator points out that "childhood has no forebodings; but then, it is soothed by no memories of outlived sorrow."[585] The idea that a child's face has no forebodings can be read in the close up photographs of Kate Keown as a child. Cameron focuses on her neutral and under developed face, analogous to a blank palimpsest ready to be written upon. In the last image of Kate, the camera keeps a distance and is no longer scrutinising her face from a close perspective.

[584] Ibid., p. 188.
[585] *MF*, p. 85.

Memory of Touch

In *Adam Bede*, Eliot gives her view of memory in childhood, which essentially links to the photographer's view of living memory:

> So much of early gladness vanishes utterly from our memory: we can never recall the joy with which we laid our heads on our mother's bosom or rode on our father's back in childhood; doubtless that joy is wrought up into our nature, as the sunlight of long-past mornings is wrought up in the soft mellowness of the apricot, but it is gone for ever from our imagination, and we can only *believe* in the joy of childhood.[586]

According to Eliot, it is impossible for grown-ups to recall the feel of the physical touch of their parents. Adults cannot regain what they used to feel because such individual feelings of the joy of touch are not reproducible. The ephemeral joy produced by touching, Eliot believes, is distilled into our nature, as "the sunlight of long-past mornings is wrought up in the soft mellowness of the apricot." Indeed, as the sunlight never leaves its trace on the apricot, neither can one remember the physical sensation of one's parents' embrace or kiss. However, what Eliot stresses here is that the adult can still appreciate such feelings by believing in the joy in the past. What she indicates here is the recollection of "touch," instead of highlighting a pessimistic sense of the loss of the memory of childhood. In the quotation above from *Adam Bede*, Eliot uses the words "sunlight" as the metaphor for ephemeral things that will eventually vanish. The light in photography, -- photographs were also called "sun-pictures" in the nineteenth century— also enables the memory of "touch" to be visually evoked.

[586] *AB*, p. 188.

Moreover, Cameron aimed to preserve presenting what one cannot feel or reproduce in the future, that is the memory of touch in childhood.

In 1864, Cameron photographed Kate Keown and her father. [Fig. 32] Unlike other aesthetically themed portraiture, this work implies a formal portrait style. Although technical failures such as the mark of chemical liquid on the photograph can be detected, Cameron conveys the close relationship between the daughter and the father. Kate on the left comfortably leans the shoulder of her father, and seems relaxed and secure; as a result, her relaxed face contrasts with her father's serious attitude. What is more notable, however, in this work is the bodily contact that expresses their close relationship. Another portrait of a father and daughter composition is *George Du Maurier and Child* of 1870. Here the daughter appears secured within the embrace of the father. The head of the father has apparently moved during exposure and thus it is blurred: This coincidental blurring of the image predicts the future in which their intimate relationship will be different. When the touch of the father's embrace and broad shoulder will become a blurred memory as is the depiction of his face. The daughter innocently stares at a different place, which indicates an indifferent attitude to the camera. Cameron often uses pairs of figures in her compositions, and the pair tend to be physically connected. This signature in which each body is ostensibly touching is particularly demonstrated in her Madonna studies such as *Blessing and Blessed* of 1865. Mavor points out that Cameron focuses on "maternal touch" through the image of women touching their babies by hands or even

Fig. 32

Julia Margaret Cameron, *Kate Keown and Thomas Keown* (1864), wet collodion, George Eastman House, Rochester, NY.

their lips.[587] Yet Cameron's photographs incorporating touch are not necessarily of mothers and children, but comprise a variety of different subjects, including daughters and fathers and pairs of children. I will consider these images of children in relation to Cameron's idea of immortal memory.

In a letter from Cameron to Halford H. Vaughan, whose infant had passed away, she consoles him by saying that "The mysteries of Heaven it had to teach unto you, thro' *the memories of the sacred kisses*, your hand, and your foot can never forget." [588] [Italics Mine] She indicates here that the physical touch in the memory of the sacred kiss will keep on living in Vaughan's body and act as a lesson in life. That the memory is distilled in the foot and hand hints at the conception of immortal memory. One can perceive this conception in Cameron's *Turtle Doves* of 1864. The paired child figures display a radical image of touch in an ambiguous way. The half-naked children pose embracing and awkwardly display an open-mouthed kiss, in what is believed to be an extraordinary image in the Victorian period.[589] In this suggestive image, in the sense of their innocent touching, the children serve as an allegory of the memory of touch. Cameron exploits the children's asexual bodies and innocent kiss to convey the idea of the sacred kiss, together with the memory of touch in explained the letter to Vaughan.

Lewes was particularly keen on disclosing the mechanism of human memory. In *Problems of Life and Mind* in1879, he analysed the difference between memory and recollection in the following way:

> In Memory, images and ideas arise spontaneously; they are "unbidden," and intrude themselves into the current of thought. But in the Recollection there is

[587] Mavor, *Pleasures Taken*, p. 48.
[588] Cited in Weaver, *Julia Margaret Cameron*, p. 152.
[589] Lukitsh, *Julia Margaret Cameron*, p. 7.

> an effort, a search, and a finding. We desire to recall a date, a fact, a name; and we try the curious suggestions which spontaneously arise, till the right track be hit on. The difference between remembering and recollection, is the difference between seeing and seeking.[590]

Recollection, according to Lewes, is a higher form of memory, as it includes the dynamism of desire, searching, and finding. More importantly, "seeking" connotes a more active inner performance than "seeing." This significance of seeking in recollection is implied in *The Mill on the Floss.* In the novel, Eliot does not seek for her memory of childhood idyllic visual landscapes such as the river or the Mill, which the Victorian readers were willing to associate with their own childhoods. Instead the novelist encourages the adult reader to rediscover childish and inaccessible perception that he or she can no longer remember. This can be seen in the following extract, in which Maggie has asked her brother Tom to cut her hair short, and then started crying after regretting the act:

> We have all of us sobbed so piteously, standing with tiny bare legs above our little socks, when we lost sight of our mother or nurse in some strange place; but we can no longer recall the poignancy of that moment and weep over it, as we do over the remembered sufferings of five or ten years ago. *Every one of those keen moments has left its trace, and live in us still, but such traces have blent themselves recoverably with the firmer texture of our youth and manhood*; and so it comes that we can look on at the troubles of our children with a smiling disbelief in the reality of their pain. Is there any one who can recover the experience of his childhood, not merely with a memory of what he did and what happened to him, of what he liked and disliked when he was in frock and trousers, but with an intimate penetration, *a revived consciousness* of what he felt then—when it was so long from one Midsummer to another? . . . Surely if we could recall that early bitterness, and the dim guesses, the strangely perspectiveless conception of life that gave the bitterness its

[590] Lewes, *Problems of Life and Mind,* Third Series (Edinburgh and London: Ballantyne Press), p. 120.

> intensity, we should not pooh-pooh the griefs of our children. [591] [Italics all Mine]

Eliot alludes to what the adult used to have as a child but cannot reproduce anymore in the mature period. She believes it still lives somewhere inside the adult. Eliot's visual image of "tiny bare legs above our little socks" suggests a past that everyone can share. Eliot makes a comparison between the child's tiny physique and childish perception: the former, she suggests, will completely metamorphose into adulthood. On the other hand, the latter, in fact, will remain rooted somewhere inside us acknowledged owing to the *"*the firmer texture of our youth and manhood.*"* This view is part of the significant moral lessons Eliot wishes to convey in her novels. She admits that the subtle emotional moments in childhood are hardly ever reproduced, but encourages the reader to recollect or seek the memory by using their imagination and, more significantly, interior vision. By questioning "[i]s there any one who can recover the experience of his childhood, … with an intimate penetration, a revived consciousness of what he felt then," Eliot draws the reader's attention to a mediocre day in childhood as a significant experience. The author thereby provides us with a new method of recollection that requires us to reanimate our perception recall a trivial but emotional moment of the past. While thus highlighting a lack of perspective in childhood, Eliot suggests that it is difficult to reproduce with accurate perception in adulthood the child's state of mind. However, our susceptible sensibility and sympathy make it possible to transcend the limitation. The lens that Eliot employs scrutinises the psychology of Maggie through a long exposure that presents the dynamism of the

[591] *MF*, pp. 65-6.

immortal childhood memory. In doing so, Eliot provides us with a new way of negotiating childhood memories.

The Implication of Death

Both Eliot and Cameron eminently contrast the concept of the living of memory with the implication of death in their works. A desire to reanimate absent or fictional people in the past is epitomised in Cameron's photography. As she visualises inaccessible people from literary texts or classical time, Cameron's photography implies their death in the future.

The work *Call and I Follow* of 1867 is inspired by the tradition of Italian Renaissance portraiture. In contrast to the figure having been presented in a theatrical setting in the other illustrations for *Idylls of the Kings*, Cameron presents the bust of Elaine. In Tennyson's poem 'Lancelot and Elaine' which is rewritten as 'The Lady of Shalott,' the heroine, after her heartbreak with Lancelot, takes a boat to the world of death. Cameron focuses on the beauty of the woman's half-profile, omitting any posture signifying a specific performance. This composition also resembles that in the portrait of *Ophelia* of 1867. Both of these heroines are destined for tragic deaths caused by their unrequited love, thus the two images imply their limited lifetime, and that their lives finished in the prime of their beauty. Both portraits elicit in the viewer a similar effect to that which Barthes describes when he saw a photograph of his mother as child. In observing the photograph, he was struck with the sense of "this will be and

this has been": In other words, he links his mother as child to her future fate of death which has since come to pass. He explains that: "[b]y giving me the absolute past of the pose, the photograph tells me death in the future. . . In front of the photograph of my mother as child, I tell myself: she is going to die."[592] As he notes, there is "defeat of time, that is dead and that is going to die."[593]

In the photographs *Call and I Follow* and *Ophelia* the figures wrap themselves in the black of the veil or the background, which strongly evokes the death that is coming and already has happened in the literary text; thus the lives of the subjects, are already historicised in terms of the event of death. Cameron was keen on creating such ephemeral representations of women doomed to die that convey the contrast between living beauty and the death that is foreshadowing.

Just as it is evident in Cameron's photographs, the effect of "this will be and this has been" can be seen in the plot of *The Mill on the Floss*. Discussing the opening scene, Coveney points out that "in fact there is an equivocal blurring as to the identity of the narrator right from the outset. . . . The blurring is deliberately courted. There is the vagueness of a dream, and, inevitably enough, the word itself is used."[594] In certain ways, this blurring echoes a photographic effect as exemplified in the opening scene where the narrator comes across Maggie at the bridge of the Floss:

> Now I [the narrator] can turn my eyes towards the mill again, and watch the unresting wheel sending out its diamond jets of water. That little girl is watching it too: she has been standing on just the same spot at the edge of the water ever since I paused on the bridge. . . . and there is a very bright fire to tempt her: the red light shines out under the deepening grey of the sky. It is time, too, for me to leave off resting my arms on the cold stone of this bridge. . . .

[592] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, p. 96.
[593] Ibid.
[594] Coveney, *The Image of Childhood,* p. 166.

> Ah, my arms are really benumbed. I have been pressing my elbows on the arms of my chair, and dreaming that I was on the bridge in front of Dorlcote Mill, as it looked one February afternoon many years ago. Before I dozed off, I was going to tell you what Mr and Mrs Tulliver were talking about, as they sat by the bright fire in the left-hand parlour, on that very afternoon I have been dreaming of. [595]

Time is confused between past and present in the passage. The vision the narrator is seeing is a certain point in the past, many years before. Therefore, in the present time when the narrator is about to tell us the story, Maggie is already dead by drowning in the flood. In this vision, the narrator is looking at Maggie as a little girl who, in Barthes's theory, has already died and also is going to die. The vision in the dream is immobilised as if it were photographed. Moreover, the repetition of the wheel and water gives the reader the sense of the invariability and immortality of time, yet it also blurs the perception of time simultaneously. In the same moment the narrator sees Maggie, standing at the same spot for a while, fixing her gaze as if posed during this time. Some bright light on which Maggie fixed her eyes could almost be a photographic flash capturing that moment of her life.

At the beginning of the novel, the reader cannot possibly know that Maggie is going to die. Yet the references to the eventual death of Maggie, in fact, are ubiquitous in the early part of the novel, especially in Mrs Tulliver's obsessive anxiety about Maggie's drowning in the river when she is missing. Moreover, the foreshadowing of death is apparent on the very first page, in the epigraph: "In their death they were not divided", which is also written in the tomb of Tom and Maggie and is also the last sentence of the novel. The novel thus starts and ends with death. Eliot consistently juxtaposes childhood and the foreshadowing of loss and death and in

[595] *MF*, pp. 8-9.

doing so, the childhood of Maggie is sublimated into a different time and space that is fixed and finite. As Barthes senses death in the photograph of his mother as child, Eliot induces the reader to sense the end of the golden time of childhood for Maggie.

Another metaphorical death of Maggie occurs in the middle of the story, the Maggie of childhood became a thing of past. This is graphically emphasised when she secretly meets Philip at the Red Deep woods. In the conversation between two, Philip takes out his miniature-case and shows Maggie the water-colour portrait he had made of her. As Maggie meets herself in the past. The scene continues in the following way:

> "O dear," said Maggie, smiling, and flushed with pleasure, "what a queer little girl I was! I remember myself with my hair in that way, in that pink frock. I really *was* like a gypsy. I daresay I am now," she added, after a little pause; "am I like what you expected me to be?"
>
> The words might have been those of a coquette, but the full bright glance Maggie turned to Philip was not that of a coquette. She really did hope he liked her face as it was now, but it was simply the rising again of her innate delight in admiration and love. Philip met her eyes and looked at her in silence for a long moment, before he said, quietly, "No, Maggie." [. . .]
>
> "You are very much more beautiful than I thought you would be."[596]

The miniature portrait, like a photographical effect, reminds Maggie of "the time that has been." She does not look like a gypsy anymore and her appearance sexually attracts a man. Thus what she finds in her own portrait is what is already absent from the present. As Marcia Pointon has noted that "[p]ortraiture is the elaboration of absence. From its earliest manifestations, the portrait has stood for an absent human being." [597] The portrait of little Maggie represents childhood as a significant but lost time. Moreover, the realisation that she is not little Maggie anymore leads to a

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[596] *MF*, pp. 300-301.
[597] Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Heaven and London: Yale UP, 1993), p. 205.

disconnection in her close relationship with Philip, which is rooted in childhood. Maggie rejects Philip's affection by declaring that "I must part with everything I cared for when I was a child. And I must part with you."[598]; " it is right that we should give each other up, in everything but memory."[599] Grown-up Maggie battles with the temptation of nostalgic feelings stirred by the meeting with Philip. And Eliot makes use of the visual image of the portrait to effectively highlight the difference between the little innocent Maggie in the past, who is dead, and the grown-up Maggie who is also going to meet her tragic death.

The combination of the figure of the child with death is frequent in Cameron's work. In *The Shadow of the Cross* of 1865 [Fig. 33] a child lies at the foreground of the composition, and it is not clear whether the child sleeps or is dead. While the body of the child is in focus, especially the legs that capture much of the light, the figure of the mother behind is out of focus and obscured by shadow. The nude figure of the child, captures the light emphasising its curviness, and contrasts strongly with the mother's fully clothed body in shadow. Cameron also manipulates the perspective so that the lying child appears in the foreground whereas the mother appears to be far behind. In this sense, the mother rather than the child might be dead, appearing behind the child as a spirit or phantom. With the implication of the death of either subject, Cameron evokes an emotional involvement for the viewer. However, the fear of loss, that is the loss of a mother or a child, is mitigated by the idealisation of the figure of child.

Cameron made several versions of this image using the same composition. One of them is entitled: *My Grandchild Archie Aged 2 Years and 3 Months* [Fig. 34]. The difference in the titles for photographs with the same composition is interesting: *The*

[598] *MF*, p. 301.
[599] Ibid., p. 326.

Shadow of the Cross suggests a metaphysical and immortal theme, while, the other title indicates the recording of a specific time, two years and three months, of her grandchild's life that is a time stamp of mortality. In *The Shadow of Cross*, Cameron's effort to transform the document of her grandchild into an aesthetic object can be seen in the decorative setting, the cross in the baby's hand and the flowers around his legs. Cameron succeeded in making the image atmospheric with her out of focus technique, and the otherworldly representation removes our concerns with mortality.

Although the descriptions in Eliot's fiction may be likened to photographic verisimilitude, we need to consider why she softened everything in *The Mill on the Floss*? Was it necessarily or even deliberately? Of course, one could read the novelist's decision as one that protects her family's private lives and their past. As Eliot distinguishes her realist representations from reality itself, her works do not dwell on imitating and copying the past. As we have found, she tries to evoke and awake genuine sympathy in her readers through authentic representation of life through fiction. The adjustment of "softening" referred to by Eliot and quoted at the beginning of this chapter leads us to a statement by Ruskin. In his *Modern Painters IV*, Ruskin compared his sketch of the towers of the Swiss Fribourg with the same scene that he daguerreotyped the next day. While the details of the sketch are exaggerated, the photograph shows an unexaggerated image. Ruskin maintains that some exaggeration is necessary to convey a true idea of the view, because, " for many of the most important facts in nature are so subtle, that they must be noticeable when they are translated into the comparatively clumsy lines of even the best drawing, . . ."[600]

[600] *Ruskin,* Vol. VI, p. 47.

Fig. 33

Julia Margaret Cameron, *The Shadow of Cross* (1865), wet collodion and glass negative, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Fig.34

Julia Margaret Cameron, *My Grand Child Archie Son of Eugene Cameron, RA. aged 2 years and 3 months* (1865) wet collodion and glass negative, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

According to Ruskin, subtle “adjustments” are essential to convey a truth. Although Ruskin disapproved of false observations, “adjustments” were allowable when the purpose was to convey a truth even if they led to some altering of the facts. The softening adjustment for Eliot was vital to convey a true view of her childhood. Like the sketch by Ruskin, as opposed to the daguerreotype, Eliot mixes the actual past with present ideas and knowledge. Eliot’s fictions capture an authentic representation encapsulated in the author’s living memory together with new observations of the artist. Similarly, for Cameron, the experience of discovering beauty in relation to hersitters is essential for her photography. Cameron makes use of fictional representations to display the authentic beauty of the sitters. Moreover, she does not regard the camera as a copying or documenting machine and attempted to create original images by emulating the compositions of the great masters of the past. As the photographer revitalises images from the past, the photographic figures represent symbols of a living memory.

Eliot and Cameron were aiming at a similar achievement. Eliot attempts to make the reader reflect upon their life through the authentic fictional characters in her writing, while Cameron attempts to produce authentic beauty by employing real people as fictional characters. The pair encourage the reader/viewer to recollect what they cannot reproduce, such as the imagined sense of touch from the past to produce an authenticity. For Eliot, memories as well as human beings are always changing. Cameron, on the other hand, reanimates beauty to evoke the viewer’s memory of the past and of those absent.

Conclusion

When the early twenty-century art critic Roger Fry examined the correlation between the history of art and humanity more generally in his essay 'Art and Life' in *Vision and Design* (1920), he writes that the Renaissance is a rare period in which art and life correspondingly and harmoniously evolved together. Within both the realms of humanity and art, Fry explains, the sense of the individual, "self-realisation," and more importantly, the scientific "recognition of reality of the material universe" emerged.[601] By contrast, however, in his survey, Fry remains silent on the art of the Victorian period including Pre-Raphaelitism. Indeed, his discussion jumps from the Renaissance to the late nineteenth century, after the 1870s, especially from Impressionism to Post-Impressionism. In fact, Fry's elimination of Pre-Raphaelite art turns out to be an attack on the mid-Victorian art creed of "truth to nature," which he compares unfavourably with what he considers the more innovative and artistic manner of the Impressionists and Post-impressionists. Fry criticises Victorian attitudes towards aesthetics, writing that "[t]he general conception of life in the mid-nineteenth century ruled out art as noxious, or at best, a useless frivolity, and above all as a mere survival of more primitive stages of evolution."[602] As a modernist critic, Fry indicates that the Victorians disregarded the role of art in relation to the evolution of humanity. Thus twentieth century writers and artists attempt to artfully forget Victorianism, and

[601] Roger Fry, *Vision and Design* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1957), p. 4. 'Art and Life,' is part of the notes of a lecture given from at the Fabian Society in 1917.
[602] Fry, *Vision and Design*, p. 15.

for them, the arts of the Victorian period resemble cobwebs hanging at the corners of a discarded shabby room.

In this thesis, I have attempted to re-trace the threads of that Victorian web of art and literature sidelined by Fry. The Victorian period of art and literature may appear to be inanimate, suspended discretely as Post-Romanticism and Pre-modernism. In her discussion of Victorian poetry, Isobel Armstrong points out that the Victorian era remains always on the way to somewhere, especially "either on the way from Romantic poetry, or on the way to modernism."[603] Furthermore, the Victorian period is post-industrial, post-Kantian,[604] post-photographic, and after the 1860s post-Darwinian. And as discussed in Chapter I and Chapter IV, Walter Benjamin asserts that after the invention of mechanical methods of reproduction such as photography, visual art objects lose their "aura," their combined magical, cultic, and ritual values.[605] Thus the role and concept of art underwent crucial changes during the nineteenth century, as its metaphysical and spiritual value, as well as its utility, disappeared. With those dramatic and subtle changes in daily life, Victorian artists were required to renegotiate, as Armstrong notes, every relationship between the self and the world.[606] In this thesis, I have been specifically concerned with the ways in which George Eliot and Pre-Raphaelite artists negotiated the past cultural influences in the light of nineteenth century modernity. The threads of past and modernity present themselves in different configurations in their works.

In a countervailing view, Oscar Wilde, in his lecture on 'The English Renaissance

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[603] Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry*, p. 1.
[604] Ibid., pp. 3-4.
[605] See Footnotes 117;542.
[606] Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry*, p. 7.

of Art', observed that Pre-Raphaelite artists brought to bear "the regeneration of art."[607] Nineteenth century artists and writers diligently sought a new-realisation of the nature of imagination by rearranging their perception of the arts and life. They attempted to renew ways of finding truth in modern life by reconsidering their relationship to the long past including Greek culture and mythology, and medieval and Renaissance arts. They sought a new outlook on art and life by weaving the threads of modern empirical and metaphysical realms, together with secular and spiritual values into the eternal and historical values from the past. As Chapter I has demonstrated, Dante Gabriel Rossetti attempted to emulate the ways in which medieval art articulated cultic passion directly in his painting of beautiful women, while reconstructing the feminine polarity of contemporary ideology. Rossetti perceived the extreme polarisation that contemporary society produced, and his exploration of "Body's Beauty" and "Soul's Beauty" together with the combination of image and text reflects his renegotiating of the past and the self in the present world. Similarly, Walter Pater's Renaissance studies focused upon Renaissance artists' individual self-cultures that together comprised a whole web of Renaissance culture, and his writing of art history becomes a medium through which a new form of ethics derived from an individual's susceptibility is revealed. As Chapter III has shown, Burne-Jones's obsession with mythology, meanwhile, provides the viewer with the sense of both modernity and a mythical past; his rendering of sculptural human bodies in his paintings that distinguishes between men and women especially indicates the sense of eternal and transient time in a swiftly shifting modern life. The Victorian anxiety of "going to somewhere" reflects the way in which the painter depicts human figures

[607] Oscar Wilde, 'The English Renaissance of Art' in *Essays and Lectures* (London: Methuen, 1911), p. 121.

with the implication of metamorphosis. This metamorphosis of the human being can be seen in Julia Margaret Cameron's child portraits too. Her photography reflects her act of preserving swift beautiful moments, while reminding the viewer of the sense of "this has been" and "this will be." Pre-Raphaelitism, thus, is a stark example of the artists' renegotiation, as they attempted to revalue the aesthetic perception and rendering from the time before the style of Raphael became predominant. The artists' endeavour of unweaving themselves from prevalent artistic concepts and more importantly, re-weaving together the old and new ways of seeing, generated the opposed trends of realism and aestheticism.

Like the Pre-Raphaelites, George Eliot was aware of the task of renegotiating of the past and the present, and empirical and metaphysical values. In a letter to Dr. Joseph Frank Payne of 1876, Eliot writes:

> … my writing is simply a set of experiments in life—an endeavour to see what our thought and emotion may be capable of—what stores of motive, actual or hinted as possible, give promise of a better after which we may strive—what gains from past revelations and discipline we must strive to keep hold of as something more sure than shifting theory. I become more and more timid–with less daring to adopt any formula which does not get itself clothed for me in some human figure and individual experience, and perhaps that is a sign that if I help others to see at all it must be through that medium of art. [608]

Eliot's work focuses on demonstrating these things "we must strive to keep hold of" while recognising shifting external reality. In particular, after the publication of *Romola*, her novels illustrate the entanglements of individuals' desires and self-realisations affected by the shifting earthly and spiritual values of the external world. Eliot's novels for which the settings are mostly in the past encompass Rossetti's

[608] *Letters,* Vol. VI, pp. 216-7.

rendering of the Victorian polarity, and also Pater's envisaging of metaphysical webs that connect the self in the present to the past. As in Burne-Jones's work, Eliot began to use such aesthetic symbols and representations as sculpture to present the correlation between physical and metaphysical realms, and metamorphosis in human sensibility. Meanwhile, the concepts of memory in the past in relation to the self in the present in Eliot's work link to what Cameron rendered in her photography. For Eliot, art provided essential media through which to chart the history of humanity that continued evolving by weaving and unweaving the web of past and modern values. And in representing this historical continuity, it was important for Eliot to encompass a diverse range of art media including elements of classical and contemporary art in her works. Both Eliot and the Pre-Raphaelites strove to rediscover historical continuity and to determine new values by weaving and unweaving the threads of a visible and transient modern life with these of an invisible eternal past.

In fact, modernist writers and artists inherit the act of envisaging webs. For example, Virginia Woolf considers the image of a spider's web in the following way:

> … fiction is like a spider's web, attached ever so lightly perhaps, but still attached to life at all four corners. Often the attachment is scarcely perceptible; Shakespeare's plays, for instance, seem to hang there complete by themselves. But when the web is pulled askew, hooked up at the edge, torn in the middle, one remembers that these webs are not spun in mid-air by incorporeal creatures, but are the work of suffering human beings, and are attached to grossly material things, like health and money and the house we lives in.[609]

Woolf's view of the connection between life and art/fiction echoes those of George Eliot and Walter Pater: In our web of life, it is inevitable that not only emotional or spiritual experience but also "grossly material things" are interwoven and these small

[609] Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (London: Penguin, 1945), p. 43.

elements eventually become significant parts of the whole shapes of individual lives. And one can read a difficulty in the way that modernists integrated themselves with their Victorian ancestors as Woolf's novel *Orlando* shows.[610] Instead of a sense of historical continuity that the Victorians sought, Woolf emphasises the significance of a moment in the novel: When Orlando enjoys his solitude, laying on the ground in summer time, Woolf writes that "he lay so still that by degrees the deer stepped nearer and the rocks wheeled round him and the swallows dipped and circled and the dragon-flies shot past, as if all the fertility and amorous activity of a summer's evening were woven web-like about his body."[611] Hence, Orlando's transcendence and entanglement with a part of the ephemeral web of the moment eminently shows a modernist image.

During the writing my thesis, I have been fortunate to visit a variety of exhibitions in London. The major exhibition of Pre-Raphaelite art at Tate Britain in 2012 and the exhibition of Virginia Woolf held at The National Portrait Gallery in 2014 inspired me to ponder the fundamental question as to whether it would be possible for an art gallery to hold an exhibition on George Eliot, or other nineteenth century literary figures, together with contemporary nineteenth century visual artworks. Through the Woolf exhibition, the National Portrait Gallery provided the public with a unique collection of visual images of a literary figure. With regard to the life of George Eliot, unlike that of Woolf, there are few portraits or photographs of the author. Although the Woolf exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery focused on the medium of portraiture, it encompassed and revealed images of the writer's inspiration resonant with twentieth century visual arts. Likewise, as illustrated by W. J. Harvey's

[610] Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry*, p. 1.
[611] Virginia Woolf, *Orlando* (Harmondsworth, New York: 1945), p. 12.

comparison of the mind of the novelist to The National Gallery itself, and as this thesis has argued, Eliot's conception of writing was influenced by a complex array of visual images. It might then be possible to exhibit at a gallery or museum aspects of her imaginative and conceptual work, to manifest her metaphors and visual descriptions in conjunction with relevant contemporary visual works. Rather than simply using a reference to George Eliot as a literary figure in an exhibition catalogue, as in the example with which I began, I suggest that an exhibition that presented her work in terms of a web of text and image would illuminate in new ways unique aspects of nineteenth century culture.

And, in concluding, it is especially important for us now to remind ourselves of the diverse strands of individual lives and different cultures that compose the web of humanity in this divided and fragile modern society.

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